

PLATO'S
Parmenides

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Mehmet Tabak



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This book is dedicated to the
loving memory of my father, Huseyin Tabak.

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INTRODUCTION

Plato's *Parmenides* is conventionally read as a two-part dialogue (part I and part II) with a brief transitional stage between its two main parts. This dialogue is based on a fictional story in which Zeno, Socrates, and Parmenides debate issues of philosophical significance at a small gathering in Athens. Part I begins in earnest with Socrates's criticism of Zeno's, and by extension, Parmenides's, Eleatic doctrine. As a viable alternative to what he takes to be Zeno's unsustainable view, Socrates outlines his own theory, which closely resembles the middle-period Platonic theory of Forms (TF). Subsequently, Parmenides levels a set of criticisms against Socrates's TF. In the transitional stage, Parmenides recommends a complicated method, which he claims is necessary for the discovery of "truth." In part II, he demonstrates this method by deducing consequences from eight (according to some, nine) main hypotheses and produces what *we* may call eight main arguments. Whether or not he succeeds in discovering the "truth" remains to be seen.

Since ancient times, what Plato intended to convey in *Parmenides*¹ has been a matter of immense controversy.² In many respects, we are still repeating the old controversies. Just about every contemporary commentary on *Parmenides* begins by making two general claims. First, because it presumably proposes a new doctrinal lesson, this dialogue occupies a central place in Plato's philosophical development. Second, *Parmenides* is notoriously enigmatic because its central lesson is unclear. Thus, it is claimed, this dialogue conveys a significant Platonic lesson, which is notoriously difficult to discern. This dilemma has led to a rich and prolonged scholarly odyssey to uncover the enigmatic lesson of *Parmenides*. Alas, no one has yet succeeded in uncovering it in a manner acceptable even to a sizable minority of Plato scholars.³

Clearly, the failure to arrive at a widely accepted agreement on *Parmenides*'s lesson has nothing to do with lack of trying. I am convinced that it has much to do with taking the aforementioned first assumption for granted. Against this assumption, I argue that there is no positive Platonic lesson in *Parmenides*, nor was it Plato's intention

to produce one. Relatedly, assuming *a priori* that there is such a lesson makes the dialogue more enigmatic than it really is. In the main, *Parmenides* is a satirical criticism of Plato's philosophical opponents,⁴ and this is its main lesson.

Despite the significant disagreements they have on the presumed Platonic lesson of *Parmenides*, many contemporary scholars more or less subscribe to what I call the *tripartite interpretation*. This interpretation may be schematically stated as follows:⁵

1. *Self-criticism*: In part I, Socrates defends Plato's middle-period TF, which, through the mouth of Parmenides,⁶ Plato now criticizes.
2. *Self-improvement*: In part II, Plato revises and improves his theory by responding to the criticisms given in part I.
3. *Turning-point*: Part II initiates a significant shift in Plato's philosophical development. The turning-point claim is given two general directions:
 - a. *End of Forms*: Plato comes to realize that his earlier TF is beyond repair and subsequently abandons it or significantly downgrades its importance.
 - b. *Radical revision*: *Parmenides* initiates an improved, significantly different TF, which is further developed in Plato's late dialogues.

I disagree with the tripartite interpretation and defend the following theses instead:

1. Parmenides's criticisms of the TF are obviously invalid. Plato displays these criticisms in order to satirize his opponents.
2. In part II, Plato demonstrates how the doctrines of his opponents are self-contradictory, or else absurd, and fare no better than his TF. He uses their method to embellish his demonstration with many obvious fallacies. For this reason, neither the method nor the arguments exercised in part II result in a new Platonic lesson in *Parmenides*.
3. *Parmenides* and two subsequent dialogues (*Theaetetus* and *Sophist*) all indicate Plato's growing desire to confront his Eleatic and sophist opponents rather than dismantle his middle-period TF.

The main purpose of this book is to defend these theses by giving them a much more rigorous defense than anyone has done previously.⁷

I intend to provide an accessible interpretation of *Parmenides* and—to this end—of five other Platonic dialogues. Chapter 1 basically summarizes the TF found in three of Plato's middle-period dialogues: *Phaedo*, *Cratylus*, and *Republic*. The main purpose of Chapter 1 is to supplement the TF Socrates briefly presents and defends in part I of *Parmenides*. Chapter 2 gives a detailed analysis of part I, with the purpose of illustrating how Parmenides's criticisms of Socrates are obviously invalid. Chapter 3 offers a close reading of part II. It shows that the eight arguments conducted in part II are, in the main, based on the hypotheses of Plato's Eleatic and sophist opponents. Plato's aim in part II is to parody the doctrines of his opponents, often with obviously fallacious and absurd deductions. Chapter 4 illustrates how *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* confirm my reading of *Parmenides*.

CHAPTER 1



FORMS IN THE MIDDLE-PERIOD DIALOGUES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a brief introduction to Plato's middle-period theory of Forms (TF) as this theory is found in *Phaedo*, *Cratylus*, and *Republic*. Actually, the TF is not Plato's central concern in any of his dialogues; part I of *Parmenides* is an exception in this regard. To be sure, Forms are crucial to Plato's philosophy, and Plato is sure that any philosophy worthy of being called such cannot function without the TF. Yet the TF is discussed in a rather scattered manner in his dialogues (including the three dialogues just named) and never amounts to an entirely neat and consistent theory. More often than one would think, Plato himself confesses to not having an entirely coherent vision of Forms. However, certain important patterns still emerge from his scattered discussions, which give us a somewhat stable sense of what his Forms are, are not, how we may come to know them, and the ontological and epistemological functions they have.

My aim in this chapter is to simply present the imprecise TF that *Phaedo*, *Cratylus*, and *Republic* offer without attempting to reconstruct it. I adopt this largely noninterventionist approach to avoid rigging these dialogues to suit the purposes of any pregiven agenda. In the ensuing chapters, I will use the information obtained here to evaluate various interpretations of *Parmenides*, including my own.

THE THEORY OF FORMS IN *PHAEDO*

The main narrator in *Phaedo* is Phaedo, a fictional character modeled after a devoted student of Socrates. We are told that Phaedo, along with Simmias, Cebes, and others, was with Socrates during his last day; Plato was absent because he "was ill" (59b).¹ Every comment attributed to Socrates in this dialogue is narrated by Phaedo to Echecrates, who wishes to learn more about Socrates's final hours. Socrates spends his final hours discussing his impending death philosophically. His ultimate message to his grieving friends is that his bodily death will not be the end of him. In order to convince them, he has to prove the immortality of the soul. Giving this proof is the main aim of *Phaedo*.

Socrates's proof of the immortality of the soul depends heavily on his theory of knowledge. At about eight Stephanus pages into the dialogue, Socrates says the body hinders the acquisition of true knowledge. Even the superior senses of sight and hearing are too "inaccurate and indistinct" to give us true knowledge. For this reason, the soul will be "deceived" if it relies on sense perception. In other words, true knowledge must be "revealed" to the soul "in thought" or through pure reflection, "and thought is best when the mind," which is the rational part of the soul, is not disturbed by any of the bodily senses. In short, in the acquisition of true knowledge, the soul must ignore the body as much as possible (65a-c).

This theory of knowledge is related to the TF. Since true knowledge depends on avoiding the senses, which sense the sensible objects, it follows that the proper objects of knowledge cannot be sensible things. Rather, they are the "absolute" entities called Forms. Socrates stipulates first that there must be such entities as "absolute justice," "absolute beauty," and "absolute good," which are the Forms of Justice, Beauty, and Good. Forms such as these are "the essences or true nature of everything." This formulation already assumes that Forms participate in sensible things and give them their "essence," or essential identity, in so doing (65d-66a).

Nevertheless, even though they somehow participate in these objects, Forms *qua* Forms cannot be among or within sensible objects. For this reason, in order to have "true knowledge," the soul must depart from the body and visit the nonexistential realm of Forms. This could only happen "after death." In "this present life, . . . we [can only] make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse or communion with the body" (66e-67b). Here, Socrates has already assumed two things: perfect knowledge is

not possible while we live in this world, and the soul continues to live on after death in a nonsensible realm in which it encounters Forms directly.

However, Socrates recognizes that he has yet to prove the immortality of the soul. The proof of the soul's immortality begins with an "ancient doctrine, which affirms that [souls] go from hence into the other world, and returning hither, are born again from the dead." Socrates's task now is to attempt to provide "conclusive" proof in favor of this doctrine or hypothesis. Should he fail to do so, "then other arguments will have to be adduced" (70c–d). This last comment gives us a gist of the method of hypothesis utilized in *Phaedo*. The ultimate aim is to discover the best approximation of truth by testing the validity, or logical consistency, of different hypotheses. The soundest hypothesis is to be accepted.

The validity of the hypothesis "the soul is immortal" depends on its generalizability—on its applicability to all things that admit of generation (this, as we will see, excludes Forms). The first premise of the proof is that "all things which have opposites [are] generated out of their opposites." In other words, Socrates wants "to show that in all opposites there is of necessity a similar alternation." Since the soul is found in two opposite conditions (life and death), it too abides by this universal law (70e–71a).

This premise is problematic, for it already presupposes what Socrates intends to prove—namely, generation. In other words, instead of *why*, Socrates is merely telling us *how* generation occurs. Moreover, it is not clear how the soul's residence in the body and its postbodily existence (death?) are opposites. It seems that the only death Socrates is admitting here is the death of the body and not that of the soul, which is immortal to begin with.

In order to prove his opposites theory, Socrates provides several problematic examples. For instance, good and evil and just and unjust generate out of each other. This statement concludes that these opposite qualities generate out of each other even though Socrates cannot accept, and will deny, this conclusion later on. He accepts it here by confusing these qualities with their comparative, relational counterparts, which are better suited for his present conclusion. He thus says that "the worse is [generated] from the better, and the more just is [generated] from the more unjust" (70e–71a). This confusion of categories will remain with us throughout *Phaedo*.

Other examples that endorse Socrates's law of generation include the following: "Anything which becomes greater must become greater after being less," and "that which becomes less must have

been once greater and then have become less." Moreover, "in this universal opposition of all things, there . . . [are] also two intermediate [opposite] processes, which are ever going on, from one to the other opposite, and back again," and "where there is a greater and a less there is also an intermediate process of increase and diminution, and that which grows is said to wax, and that which decays to wane." These examples, and others, provide a satisfactory proof, it is agreed, that the law of generation holds true universally—namely, that "all opposites . . . are really generated out of one another, and there is a . . . process [of becoming] from one to the other of them." If so, reasons Socrates, "life" and "death," since they are also opposites, are "generated" from one another. If "the previous admissions" are true, then we have "a most certain proof that the souls of the dead exist in some place out of which they come again" (71b–72b). Socrates will radically modify this claim in the following discussion and assert instead that life and death *replace* one another in the body, rather than "[generate] out of one another."

At this point in the dialogue, Cebes reminds Socrates that the latter has another, related proof of the immortality of the soul: "Your favorite doctrine, Socrates, that knowledge is simply recollection, if true, also necessarily implies a previous time in which we have learned that which we now recollect. But this would be impossible unless our soul had been in some place before existing in the form of man; here then is another proof of the soul's immortality." Simmias demands further proof, and Cebes gives one on Socrates's behalf: "One excellent proof . . . is afforded by questions. If you put a question to a person in a right way, he will give a true answer of himself, but how could he do this unless there were knowledge and right reason already in him? And this is most clearly shown when he is taken to a diagram or to anything of that sort" (72e–73b). Clearly, Cebes is repeating the proof of the theory of recollection that Socrates provides in *Meno* (80a–86c).²

Given Simmias's apparent skepticism, Socrates proceeds to offer further proof in favor of the recollection theory of knowledge, and with that, the immortality of the soul. For instance, since they are associated with one another, "anyone who sees Simmias may remember [recollect] Cebes," even if he is not present with Simmias. In short, there is obviously such "a process of recovering" a memory that is precisely recollection by association. This may happen through the association of both like and unlike things. For instance, seeing a horse may also remind one of a person related to that horse, even though the horse and the person in question are unlike each other (*Phaedo*, 73b–74a).

What Socrates says next is very crucial to understanding the TF: "When the recollection is derived from [the observation of] like things, then another consideration is sure to arise, which is—whether the likeness in any degree falls short or not of that which is recollected." This statement already assumes that Forms are the perfect, absolute entities (perhaps paradigms) we recollect from our observation of the imperfection of the likenesses found in sensible things. In order to prove his point, and in a circular manner, Socrates first takes it for granted again that, for instance, "there is such a thing as equality, not of one piece of wood or stone with another, but that, over and above this, there is absolute [Form of] equality." We recollect this Form from the observation of the "equalities of material things, such as pieces of wood and stones," and reason that the Form of Equality must be distinct from these sensible equalities.³ To look at this "matter in another way," the "same pieces of wood or stone appear at one time equal, and at another time unequal." But the true Equality cannot alter in this manner and thus appear both equal and unequal. This reflection shows that these fluctuating "equals are not the same with the idea [Form] of equality." Yet, "from these equals," we have "conceived and attained that idea [i.e., the Form of Equality]." This conception "surely" is "an act of recollection" (74d–d).

In short, the equalities found in sensible things are not the same as the absolute Equality; they are its "inferior" and manifold "copies." Furthermore, whoever "makes this observation must have had a previous knowledge of that [Form] to which the other [equality], although similar [alike], was inferior." Then the Form of Equality, which we appropriate before birth and now recollect, serves as the "standard" by which we make sense of the observable equalities, which are the both imperfect and fluctuating likenesses of this absolute "standard" (74d–75b). Forms, then, are like, but not the same as, their imperfect representations in things.

Socrates adds that what has been said of the Form of Equality is also true of the Forms of Beauty, Good, and all other absolute essences. By referring to "our sensations" and comparing their imperfect representations to one another, we discover that these Forms must be our "pre-existent and inborn" possessions. This discovery presumably shows once again that "our souls must have had a prior existence." Overall, the "proof that these ideas [Forms] must have existed before we were born" amounts to the same proof "that our souls existed before we were born." If one proof falls, so does the other, says Socrates (76d–e). At the same time, this proof clearly implies that Forms themselves, even though they participate in the sensible objects

as imperfect instances and copies, are also beyond this sensible, bodily world.

After another discussion on the possibility of afterlife, Socrates returns to his theory of Forms. On the one hand, unlike their variable instances, these absolute essences are *not* "liable" to any "degree of change." Instead, "each of them" is "always" what it *is* in itself, never "admitting of variation . . . in any way, or at any time." They are "always the same." On the other hand, the many beautiful, sensible things are "hardly ever the same, either with themselves or with one another." Also, these can be sensed, "but the unchanging [Forms] . . . can only [be grasped] with the mind—they are invisible and are not seen" (78d–79d).

A comparable description of the Form of Beauty is given in *Symposium*. It is "everlasting"; it "neither comes nor goes . . . neither flowers nor fades," for the Form of Beauty is always "the same." It does not exist in time or space, meaning that it is "the same then as now, here as there." Forms, then, in no sense vary, change, or fluctuate. Moreover, the Form of Beauty is "neither words, nor knowledge, nor a something that exists in something else, such as a living creature, or the earth, or the heavens, or anything that is [i.e., exists]—but subsisting of itself and by itself in an eternal oneness." Of course, Socrates is not denying participation here. He is only denying that Forms *as* Forms *exist* in any place, in any time, or in any thing. In this spirit, he adds immediately that "every lovely thing partakes [of] such sort that, however much the parts may wax and wane, [the Form] will be neither more nor less, but still the same inviolable whole" (211a–b).⁴ Likewise, *Phaedrus* says Forms are "veritable . . . without color or shape" and "cannot be touched" (247c–e).

After a long detour on various already familiar topics, Socrates proposes to return to the earlier discussion on the "nature of generation and corruption [destruction]" (*Phaedo*, 96a). He begins with an interesting account of the development of his own theory of causes, which basically explains how he came to reject the materialist explanations of causation. Socrates does not in this context deny material causation *tout court*. He is ultimately trying to tell us that the materialist explanations are incapable of accounting for essential (and moral) causation and that we must instead have "recourse to the world of mind and seek there the truth of existence"—namely, the essential causes of things in existence (96a–100a).

Once again, Socrates repeats, with a modification, that the method of hypothesis is the best method to determine the validity of different theories. This "method" first assumes "some principle . . . judged to

be the strongest, and then . . . [affirms] as true whatever . . . [seems] to agree with [the principle],” and whatever disagrees with it should be “regarded as untrue.” (This method, as we should have already noted, is not based on deductive reasoning—presumably invented by the historical Parmenides and rigorously practiced by Zeno, Gorgias, and others.)⁵ The soundest and strongest principle is one with which many people already agree: “There is an absolute beauty and goodness and greatness, and the like.” If this principle is granted, then Socrates can proceed to prove both his own theory of “the nature” of causation and “the immortality of the soul.” Given the soundest principle as his premise, argues Socrates, “other than absolute beauty,” whatever is beautiful “can be beautiful only in as far as it partakes of absolute beauty.” Even though there have been other hints at it earlier, what we get with Socrates’s theory of causation here is precisely the participation theory of Forms. Importantly, participation is described here as the “presence” of a Form “in” things, though, admits Socrates, “as to the manner” of participation, he is “uncertain.” Still, he is firmly convinced that it is by the participation of the Form of Beauty in them that “all beautiful things become [or are] beautiful.” However, Socrates’s causation-participation theory becomes further complicated when he adds the following examples: it is also “by [the absolute] greatness only [that] great things become great and greater [still], . . . and by [the absolute] smallness [that] the less become less” (100a–101b). Because Socrates includes relational measures (“greater,” “taller,” “less,” and “smaller”) to his causation theory, he will have difficulty with his ensuing explanations of causation.

Socrates has already admitted that he does not know the details of participation. In order to validate his admittedly obscure theory, he has to show that the alternative theory of causation is unsound. He has already mentioned an unpersuasive (materialist) theory, which holds, for instance, that a man is “taller than the other by a head” (96a–97b). Anyone who says one person is taller than another person by (or because of) a head, “which is the same in both [persons],” commits an “absurdity.” In other words, we cannot say one person is taller than another because of the head they both have in common. Moreover, since a head is a short thing, it is unreasonable to argue that a short thing is the cause of tallness (100e–101b).

These two objections to the materialist causation theory already indicate some confusion on Socrates’s part. The first objection speaks of the relational measure of being taller and shorter, whereas the second objection points to the essential quality of tallness—or shortness. Moreover, the first objection is not denying that adding a head could

make someone taller. Instead, it is denying that the same (sized?) head that is *already* possessed by two persons could account for one person being taller than the other person. At any rate, since the materialist theory has been found to produce absurd consequences, Socrates reurges that there is no other way in which any given object can be what it essentially is, except by partaking of its relevant Form (101c).

After agreeing once again that there are Forms, "that other things . . . [partake of] them," and that these other things "derive their names from" their relevant Forms, Socrates proceeds to explain in what manner a sensible thing can and cannot have contrary attributes. When we say "Simmias is greater than Socrates and [smaller] than Phaedo," we "predicate of Simmias both greatness and smallness," or tallness and shortness. However, contrary to what this saying may imply, Simmias is not taller than Socrates "because he is Simmias"; he is taller "by reason of the size which he has" in comparison to Socrates. Likewise, Simmias is not shorter than Phaedo because of his essential identity (of tallness?); rather, he is so because of the accidental size attribute he has relative to Phaedo. In this manner, we may say Simmias is both taller and shorter "because he is in a mean between" Socrates and Phaedo. Thus Simmias is taller because his physical size exceeds Socrates's physical shortness, and Simmias is shorter because of the relatively taller size of Phaedo in relation to Simmias (102a–d).

It follows that a sensible object, such as Simmias, can incidentally have contrary characteristics. However, this cannot be said either of Forms, such as Tallness, or of the essential character of tallness in Simmias. This claim reconfirms Socrates's rejection of materialist causation theory. In contrast, the tallness "in us," instead of admitting shortness into itself, either will "retire" from us upon the "approach" of shortness or "has already ceased to exist." This is true of all opposite essential qualities; they will never "be or become . . . [their] own opposite." This claim is also true of Forms themselves (102d–103a).

At this point, "one of the company" suggests that Socrates has just contradicted the generation theory he had proposed earlier. Socrates had said earlier that "out of the greater came the [smaller] and out of the [smaller] the greater, and that opposites were simply generated from opposites; but now this principle seems to be utterly denied." Socrates thinks this objection is not valid because it ignores the fact that "there is a difference in the two cases." Previously, he was speaking of the opposite qualities inherent in the physical objects. In contrast, he is now speaking of these qualities themselves—after which

the physical ones are named. These qualities "will never, as we maintain, admit of generation into or out of one another" (103b).

I will not pretend to entirely understand the difference Socrates is trying to convey here. He seems to assume that, apart from the essential attribute of tallness, which derives from the Form of Tallness, there is yet another type of tallness in us, perhaps an entirely physical one, which is both relational and accidental to what we essentially are. Still, it is hard to see a clear distinction here between an essential attribute and the physical thing it qualifies.

According to Socrates, there are also some nonopposite Forms that cannot participate in the same body, much like the opposite ones. Once again, his explanation is confusing. For instance, he says there are such things that we call "heat and cold" and "fire and snow." We must readily admit that, like Simmias's opposite attributes, "at the advance of the heat, the snow will either retire or perish." Likewise, fire cannot admit cold. Yet snow-heat and fire-cold are not opposites (103c-d). Socrates's present explanation seems to rely on material causation. Besides, it is not true that snow cannot admit any degree of heat.

Without any warning, Socrates switches to the Form theory of causation and claims that in certain cases such as these, the name of the Form, for instance Coldness, is also applicable to snow. In other words, snow necessarily partakes of Coldness and is appropriately called "cold." Thus snow necessarily partakes of both Coldness and Snow and is named and known by the names of both Forms. We can say the same thing of "Oddness." We call both "Oddness" and the number three (and other odd numbers) "odd," even though "three" and "odd" are not the same. The reason for this is that the number three always partakes of Oddness and of the Form of Three (103d-e).

These considerations lead to the following "general conclusion" of the present argument: not only will opposite Forms and the essential qualities not receive their own opposites, but also any sensible thing that partakes of a Form will not admit the opposite of the Form of which it partakes (103e-105a). This argument implies that, with the exception of opposites, more than one Form can coparticipate in a single body and come to associate (combine and communicate) with one another in this manner. Hence we may combine Forms, which are already combined in reality as qualities and say that snow is cold, though we cannot (I surmise) say that cold is hot or that tall is short.

This detour on Forms was meant to prove, once again, the immortality of the soul, which we are now told (I think analogously) is "the form of life." All Forms, including "the form of life," are "immortal,"

and, as such, are also "indestructible." For this reason of being Form-like, the soul behaves like Forms in the sense that it too does not partake in the body with its opposite. Here the soul is equated with life and treated as the opposite of death (not afterlife). Thus concludes Socrates, since life and death are opposites and since the Form-like soul is imperishable, upon the arrival of death, the soul withdraws from the body without perishing (105d–107a).

We thus obtain another law of opposites here. Certain kinds of opposites, such as the instances of opposite Forms, do not generate out of each other. Instead, they replace one another in a given body. Life and death also abide by this rule. Thus when death arrives, the soul (the Form of life) departs from the body. However, it remains unclear whether Socrates (absurdly) thinks the reverse process, in which the soul forces death out of the body, also occurs. All we have been told in this regard is that we obtain our souls at birth, which is hardly a process of life pushing death out of the body.

At any rate, and apart from the manifold complications of this dialogue, *Phaedo* tells us that Forms are absolute entities; they are not sensible objects; they participate in sensible objects and thus give these objects their essential qualities; they are like but not the same as their inferior instances (i.e., the essential qualities); they never participate *in* the same body with their opposites; and they never partake *of* anything else, for they are absolute and not liable to any variation or modification.

At the end of the dialogue, Crito asks Socrates how he wishes to be buried. Having rendered the body a hindrance to goodness and wisdom, Socrates says "in any way that you like." The true Socrates is the immaterial mind who has been "conducting his arguments" and not the one who will shortly become "a dead body" (115c–d). At this point, Socrates is given the poison, which he drinks "quite readily and cheerfully." As if the proofs of the immortality of the soul had no impact on them, all in the company break into tears. "What is this strange outcry?" asks Socrates; "I have been told that a man should die in peace." As the effect of the poison spreads throughout his entire body, Socrates musters enough energy to utter his "final words": "Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius," the divine healer. He is now truly healed. *Phaedo*'s conclusion is befitting: "Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend . . . Of all the men of his time whom I have known, he was the wisest and justest and best" (117c–118).

THE THEORY OF FORMS IN *CRATYLUS*

The main topic of *Cratylus* is the theory of names. This topic is discussed by three fictional characters: Socrates, Cratylus, and Hermogenes. Hermogenes timidly advocates the *convention* theory, and Cratylus adamantly defends the *nature* theory of names. Socrates initially argues that names are both natural and conventional. However, he adds later on in the dialogue that names are always imitations of the things they are meant to signify. Socrates's arguments entail a fundamental ontological assumption: the world is not in pure flux. Each thing has a defining essence, and each essence derives from a single Form. Correctly assigned names are the images (imitations) of the essences of things, essences are images of Forms, and names are thus the images of the images of Forms. For this reason, true knowledge requires reflection on essences and consequently arriving at Forms. The study of names yields no such knowledge.

At the beginning of the dialogue, Cratylus perplexes Hermogenes by telling him that "Cratylus" and "Socrates" are "true" names. These names, so he claims, reflect the true nature of their bearers. However, he also tells Hermogenes that "if all the world were to call you Hermogenes, that would not be your name" (383b).⁶ The reason for this exception is that the name "Hermogenes" derives from Hermes, but *this* Hermogenes does not have any Hermes-ness in him. Cratylus's two claims entail a paradox: names cannot be false for they are strictly "natural and not conventional" (428a-b), but Hermogenes's given name is neither natural nor true. This paradox will become important in the following discussion.

Socrates is invited to weigh in on this debate. He joins them by first considering the convention theory, which he associates with Protagoras's doctrine. According to Protagoras, we are told, "The truth is that things are as they appear to anyone" (386c). This subjectivist, conventional view lends itself to the conclusion that "any name which you give . . . is the right one, and if you change that [name] and give another [name to the same thing], the new name is as correct as the old." Therefore, all names are established by the "convention and habit of the users" (384d). As we will find out later on, this conclusion is consistent with Cratylus's nature theory of names, which says "any name" given to things or persons is "the right one." Protagoras says whatever we say is necessarily correct; Cratylus says we cannot say that which is not. All in all, both doctrines amount to denying falsehood, and as we will see in Chapter 4, these views may also be associated with the historical Parmenides's doctrine.

Socrates summarily dismisses Protagoras's view. He says, "Things are not relative to individuals . . . they must be supposed to have their own proper and permanent essence; they are not in relation to us, or influenced by us, fluctuating according to our fancy, but they are independent [of our fancy], and maintain to their own essence the relation prescribed by [their] nature" (386c–387b).

Socrates's essence theory basically repeats the causation-participation theory of Forms he proposes in *Phaedo*. There is, for instance, a Form of Shuttle. Even though there are many types of shuttles, they all "ought to . . . have [or partake of] the true form of the shuttle" if they are to be shuttles at all (*Cratylus*, 389b–c). Socrates immediately links this ontological claim to the nature theory of names. Names "by nature" have "a truth." For instance, the name "shuttle" derives from the shuttleness of shuttles, which, in turn, derive from the Form of Shuttle (390e–391b). However, Socrates's nature-theory of names is different from the one Cratylus defends. It ultimately rests on the abiding essences derived from Forms. Cratylus's Heraclitean view takes nature to be in flux and accepts that correctly given names can signify flux instead of signifying their abiding essences. Socrates is about to criticize this view.

Socrates says next that "not every man knows how to give a thing a name" (391b). This is also a hidden criticism of Protagoras, who, according to Socrates in *Theaetetus*, claims that "every man" is the measure of truth (see Chapter 4). Socrates goes on to discuss in taxing detail how various authorities have misnamed things. He adds in this context, not without sarcasm, that "the first imposers of names must surely have been considerable . . . philosophers." Suddenly, Socrates discovers "a hive of wisdom," which he says is "rather ridiculous, and yet plausible." He speculates that "Heraclitus [might have been] repeating wise traditions of antiquity as old as the days of Cronus and Rhea . . . Heraclitus is supposed to say that all things are in motion, and nothing at rest; he compares them to the stream of a river, and says that you cannot go into the same river twice." The immediate point being made here is that "he who gave the name of Cronus and Rhea to the ancestors of gods agreed pretty much in the doctrine of Heraclitus" in the sense that "the names of streams," which are in flux, were given to both of these gods.⁷ Another example of this is Oceanus, who is called the "fair river." This too is "a remarkable coincidence, and all in the direction of Heraclitus" (401b–402c). However, not all names are "in the direction of Heraclitus." In some cases, "the office and the name of the god really correspond" (403b). This is the case with Apollo's name, which "is really most expressive of

the power of the god" (404e). Some names are thus correctly attributed to gods, and some are not. The ones that are correctly attributed do not signify flux.

Hermogenes asks Socrates to explain the names given to "virtues," such as "wisdom, understanding, justice, and the rest of them." Socrates's response to this question takes a more critical tone toward "the primeval givers of names" than before. He says they "were undoubtedly like too many of our modern philosophers, who, in their search after the nature of things, are always getting dizzy from constantly going round and round, and they imagine that the world is going round and round and moving in all directions." An important implication of this statement is that the modern philosophers impose their own perplexity onto the world they seek to explain. Consequently, they take "this appearance, which arises out of their own internal condition," to adequately reflect the "reality of nature." In other words, "they think" that "there is nothing stable or permanent, but only flux and motion, and that the world is always full of every sort of motion and change." This flux theory of the world, he adds, is "indicated" in the names of the virtues just mentioned, for they imply "motion, or flux, or generation of things" (411a-c). Clearly, Socrates (Plato) does not accept the pure flux theory of the Heracliteans.

In the next several pages of *Cratylus*, we are told repeatedly that "there is an [abiding] essence of each thing" and that the correctly given names "express the nature [abiding essence] of each thing" (423a-424c). Since essences are the images of Forms, correctly assigned names imitate the imitations of Forms. With Hermogenes's agreement, Socrates adds that "naming is an art, and has artificers," who are called "the legislators." Arts are subject to development, and some artificers, including the legislators of names, produce better artifacts than the others. It follows from this that "one name" can be "better than another," as is the case with all artifacts (428e-429b). A name is "better than another" when it more closely reflects the abiding essence of the thing it signifies. Socrates will return to this point later on.

Cratylus disagrees with Socrates and says all names are correctly given "if they are names at all" (429b). In response, Socrates brings up the issue of Hermogenes's name again. Cratylus has already told Hermogenes that even if everyone were to call him "Hermogenes," this name still would not be his name (383b). With this example as his pretext, Socrates now asks, "Assuming that he has nothing of the nature of Hermes in him, shall we say that [Hermogenes] is a wrong name, or not his name at all?" Cratylus says that "Hermogenes is not

his real name at all, but only appears to be his, and is really the name of somebody else, who has the nature which corresponds to" this name. Socrates reasons that anyone who calls Hermogenes "Hermogenes" must "be speaking falsely" because he or she is calling him what "he is not" (429b–d). Thus by Cratylus's own admission, it is possible to name someone incorrectly and make a false statement by attributing to him the wrong name.

However, Cratylus still does not see the dilemma he has brought upon himself. He asks Socrates to clarify his point. Socrates responds by asking another question: "Are you maintaining that falsehood is impossible?" Cratylus's answer repeats the dilemma. He responds with a rhetorical question: "How can a man [speak of] that which is not, . . . for is not falsehood saying the thing which is not?" (429d). Given the general drift of his argument, Cratylus implies that "that which is not" cannot be said. Since falsehood amounts "saying the thing which is not," then it is impossible to make a false statement. Even though he is not mentioned here, Cratylus's argument repeats the historical Parmenides's pronouncement: it is impossible to think or say that which is not.

Socrates sardonically finds Cratylus's response "too subtle for a man of" his age and gets Cratylus to admit unambiguously that falsehood can be "neither spoken nor said." What if, asks Socrates, someone in a foreign country calls you "Hermogenes, son of Smicrion"? Cratylus responds that anyone who calls him Hermogenes "would only be talking nonsense." Socrates asks for clarification: "Tell me whether the nonsense would be true or false, or partly true or partly false." Cratylus stubbornly repeats his previous argument: the foreigner's "words would be an unmeaning sound like the noise of hammering at a brazen pot" (429d–430e). Cratylus thus distinguishes "talking nonsense," which is possible, from "falsehood," which is impossible. It follows that no statement is ever false, but some statements can be nonsensical (meaningless) if they state *that which is not*. This distinction highlights the paradoxical nature of Cratylus's claims, which overlook the fact that, saying he *is* "Hermogenes" is a meaningful statement but a false one on the ground that *what is not* true of Cratylus is attributed to him.

At this point, the dialogue returns to the imitation theory of names. It should be noted that the imitation theory is related to the previous disputation between Socrates and Cratylus. In a way, speaking of things—that is, using their names—always involves derivation from what is real and true, precisely because names are always imitations. This implies that, since they never truly express the entity they signify,

all names entail some sense of *is not*. In order to illustrate his argument, Socrates first gets Cratylus to agree that “the name is not the same with the thing named” and that “name is an imitation of the thing” it names. They also agree that “pictures are also imitations of things, but in another way” than the names are said to be imitations. Socrates only emphasizes their similar function, however. Both names and pictures are “attributable and applicable to the things of which they are the imitation” (430a–b).

The initial goal is to establish the “right” way and the “wrong” way of attributing imitations to the originals. Calling a man “man” or attributing a picture of a man to a man is the right (correct) way, and attributing the “likeness [imitation] of the man to the woman, and [the likeness] of the woman to the man” the wrong (incorrect, false) way. The right way is “the mode of assignment which attributes to each that which belongs to it and is like it.” If so, concludes Socrates, we may call “the right assignment” of names and pictures “truth” and “the wrong assignment falsehood.” This conclusion cannot “be disputed” (430b–431c).

After a lengthy disputation on how “some names are well and others ill made,” Socrates says the “geometric diagrams” are also imitations and “have often a slight and invisible flaw.” Socrates argues that the geometers “mistakenly” inherit the “invisible flaw in the first part of process” by relying on visible diagrams (Socrates also repeats this claim in *Republic*.) In other words, their hypothesis formation is based on a flawed truth obtained from images. This flaw is then carried over into the “long deductions which follow” the initial and mistaken hypothesis. For this reason, careful attention should be given to the “first principles—are they or are they not rightly laid down?” (436d). The gist of Socrates’s argument here is that only rightly conceived first principles can be taken as the foundation of true knowledge and a true account. Anything drawn exclusively from imitations is not truly real and thus cannot be an object of true knowledge. In order to defend this view, Socrates has to take several additional steps.

First, Socrates crucially distinguishes likeness from sameness. (As we will see in the ensuing chapters, neither the Eleatics nor Protagoras is willing to accept this distinction.) All imitations are necessarily like, but not the same as, the original. In other words, “the image, if expressing in every point the entire reality [sameness], would no longer be an image.” For instance, if Cratylus were to be duplicated by “some god” in every respect, then we would have “two Cratyluses.” Since they are images, names also cannot be “exactly the same” as the things they reflect. However, an imitation, in order to be like the

original, has to retain "the general character of the thing" it imitates (432b–e). In this sense, the various imitations of Cratylus only need something of his general character to be like him and each other, but they cannot be imitations of Cratylus if they are exactly the same as him. It follows from this clarification that an imitation both *is* and *is not* Cratylus.

This theory of imitation reinforces Socrates's view that names do not fully express *the truth* of the things they name. In order to drive this point home, Socrates first asks, "What is the force of names, and what is the use of them?" Cratylus has not retreated an inch from his earlier position. Accordingly, he replies that their "force" is to "inform" us of the truth because "he who knows names knows also the things which are expressed by them" (435d–e). After a digression on how names were originally given incorrectly, Socrates asserts more directly this time that "things may be known without names." Indeed, they may be truly known only through the "true and natural way, through their affinities, when they are akin to each other, and through themselves." Socrates only focuses on the latter method here. He reasserts that even "names rightly given are the likenesses and images of the things which they name." For this reason, obtaining knowledge "from the things themselves" through reflection is the "nobler and clearer way" of knowing the truth (438e–439b).

The investigation of things through "themselves" refers to the investigation of their essences, which somehow can be derived from the observation of the likenesses possessed by objects within the same class of things. Socrates might be expressing something like the *Phaedo* theory of *reflection* here, though *recollection* (anamnesis) plays no role in the present context. It is urged that such an investigation would take us to Forms, since essences, as we have seen earlier, derive from them. Here, Socrates and Cratylus agree that there are such things as "absolute beauty" and that we "must seek the true beauty," which is "always beautiful," and not the beauty in "a face" or "anything that sort, for such things appear to be in a flux." Thus the absolute Beauty and the beauty in a face are alike but not the same. Unlike the absolute Beauty, the things we observe "are always passing away" and are "first this and then that." It follows also that that which is "never in the same state" cannot be a "real thing" (439b–e).

By this, Socrates cannot mean that everything besides Forms is in pure flux and thus utterly unreal. He has already suggested that shuttles have an abiding essence, which is given to them by the Form of Shuttle. What he says next makes it unmistakably clear that he does not here propose the pure flux theory: if things were only in flux,

knowledge of them “by anyone” would be impossible. This is because the moment we approach them, they would, at the same moment, become “of another nature.” In other words, “if everything is in a state of transition, and there is nothing abiding [in them],” there cannot be any “knowledge at all.” Even if we could come to know something, on the assumption that everything is in flux, our knowledge of it would also perish as soon as it was acquired. On the same assumption of flux advocated by “Heraclitus and his followers,” it would also be impossible for any kind of knower to exist. Stated from the opposite angle, “If that which knows and that which is known exist ever, and the beautiful and the good and every other thing also exist[s],” then they cannot “resemble a process or flux.” All these discussions indicate that essences, and Forms by extension, are necessary for genuine knowledge (440a–c).⁸

Cratylus ends humbly in a Socratic fashion. Socrates says that what he has been arguing all along may or may not be true and urges Cratylus to “reflect well.” Socrates also says that when Cratylus has “found the truth,” tell it to him also. Cratylus, still so sure of his convictions, assures Socrates that he has been laboriously “considering the matter” already, and he still inclines “to Heraclitus.” He urges Socrates to keep thinking “about these things” himself (440d). This final scenario is not an unusual one. In many Platonic dialogues, Socrates, after presenting the winning arguments, expresses his doubt about them and, consequently, downplays the certainty of his own knowledge of truth.

THE THEORY OF FORMS IN *REPUBLIC*

Relative to its lengthy size, *Republic* has very few direct comments on Forms. The main topic of this dialogue is justice. Having a just soul and a just body politic, which are linked to happiness, both depend on having wisdom, which, in turn, depends on the apprehension of Forms. *Republic* consistently, along with many other dialogues, argues that only a few people have the inborn power to apprehend Forms. These philosophical souls are the ones who are “naturally dialectical” (537c).⁹ More than any other dialogue, *Republic* repeats the importance of dialectic in the apprehension of Forms. Even though dialectic is not very clearly described, Plato’s various discussions of it supply us with useful information on his TF. The main aim of this section is to outline both the TF and the dialectic method Plato, via Socrates, describes in this momentous dialogue.

Like the other two dialogues we have discussed, *Republic* maintains that Forms are the proper objects of true knowledge. The link

between knowledge and objects of knowledge is a link between ontology and epistemology. However, in *Republic* we find a more elaborate and systematic articulation of Plato's ontology and epistemology than we do in his other dialogues. Here, Socrates argues that there are "four conditions" of the soul, which correspond to the four degrees of the ontological reality (511d). Socrates describes these corresponding levels with the divided line analogy found at the end of book VI.

The ontological world is divided into two realms, the visible-sensuous and the invisible-intelligible. Each one of these two realms is further divided into a pair of subsections. In the visible, lower realm are shadows and reflections of physical objects and the physical objects themselves. These correspond to two epistemological categories, which are illusion and belief. At times, Socrates combines illusion and belief under "opinion." In the lower subsection of the higher intelligible realm are the intelligible objects, such as numbers, lines, geometrical shapes, and so on. Forms are placed above these, though Socrates occasionally assigns a special status to the Form of Good. The objects in the first and second intelligible subsections are more real than the visible, sensible ones. Forms are the truly real entities. It should be noted that the visible world cannot stand on its own and apart from Forms. Forms supply *being* to this world, though in a derivative manner. Epistemologically speaking, the intelligible objects (numbers, shapes, etc.) correspond to *thought* and Forms to *understanding* (509d–513e). Socrates uses the term "understanding" interchangeably with "knowledge" or "*true knowledge*."

Socrates says shadows and tangible things are "visible but not intelligible, while the forms are intelligible but not visible." This distinction indicates that the soul has many parts, shown by the fact that it has the power both to sense and to ratiocinate. The power to sense is further divided into the powers to see, hear, and so on. Socrates asserts, incorrectly, that hearing and sound do not need a third, mediating moment (507b–508b).¹⁰ In contrast, "sight and the visible have such a need" for a third "thing," which is "light." The sun is the source of light, which makes sight possible. For this reason, sight is "the most sun-like of the senses" because "it receives from the sun the power it has." But being alike is not tantamount to being the same. If so, "the sun is not sight." It is, rather, "the cause of sight" and of what is "seen by it." With great difficulty on the eyes, the sun can also be seen (507b–508b).

In this context, Socrates is mainly using the sight-sun relationship analogously: the relationship of the Form of Good "to understanding and intelligible things" parallels the relationship of the sun "to

sight and visible things.” In other words, this Form “gives truth to the things known and the power to know to the knower.” When the soul, through its rational part, “focuses on something illuminated” by the Good, “it understands, knows, and apparently possesses understanding.” However, when, with “its powers of sensation,” the soul “focuses on what is mixed with obscurity, on what comes to be and passes away [i.e., the objects of the visible realm], it opines and is dimmed, changes its opinions this way and that way, and seems bereft of understanding.” Moreover, even though the Good is “the cause of knowledge and truth, it is also an object of knowledge.” Hence “it is right to think of knowledge and truth as goodlike but wrong to think that either of them” is the Form of Good (508b–509a). Another way to say this is that the Form of Good does not think; the soul does by encountering it and being powered by it.

The present theory of the Form of Good seems to be a novel intervention on Plato’s part. We can already surmise from what he says of it previously that this Form has a special status among other Forms. This status is further galvanized when Socrates adds that all Forms “owe their being” to the Good, which is “not being, but superior to it in rank and power” (509b). This piece of information raises two important issues without addressing them. First, it is not clear what “not being, but superior to it in rank and power” means. Perhaps “not being” implies that the Good *is not* of the same status as other Forms. Perhaps, as some have speculated, the Good is not, properly speaking, a Form. However, an earlier discussion in *Republic* sets the Good *en par* with other Forms and says each of them “is one” and has an opposite Form, including “the good and the bad, and all the forms” (476a).

At any rate, Socrates has argued here that there are four different levels of ontological reality that correspond to four different conditions of the soul. These conditions represent four different kinds of apprehension, which are made possible by the different powers of the soul. The apprehension of Forms requires a proper method, which is dialectic. In book VI, Socrates offers a detailed but somewhat confusing description of dialectic, which he calls “our” usual “procedure.” However, in this context, two procedures are discussed together, making it rather difficult for his readers to discern whether only one or both procedures deserve to be called “dialectic.” I will assume in the following discussion that the procedure of “geometers” and such is not dialectic.

In one procedure, “the soul . . . is forced to investigate from hypotheses, proceeding not to a first principle but to a conclusion.” This procedure is practiced by the “students of geometry, calculation, and

the like," who "hypothesize the odd and the even, the various figures, the three kinds of angles, [etc.] . . . in each of their investigations, as if they knew them. They make these [intelligible objects] their hypotheses and don't think it necessary to give any account of them . . . as if they were clear to everyone. And going from these [what they believe to be] first principles through the remaining steps, they arrive [at a conclusion] in full agreement." In other words, "although those who study the objects of these sciences are forced to do so by means of thought, rather than sense perception, still, because they do not go back to a genuine first principle," they do not "understand" these objects. What the practitioners of this procedure produce is "thought, but not understanding." Socrates asserts that such intelligible objects are actually "understandable" (510b–511c).

Socrates returns to this method of the geometers in book VII. With the previous passage in mind, he says that "geometry and the subjects that follow it" have been "described" as "to some extent grasping what is, for we saw that, while they do dream about what is, they are unable to command a waking view of it as long as they" merely rely on hypotheses derived from geometrical shapes and other such things. In the previous discussion, Socrates has said they pretend to know what their hypotheses imply. Thus they "don't think it necessary to give any account of them" and go on discussing them "as if they were clear to everyone." Socrates now calls into question their pretensions more sharply: "What mechanism could possibly turn any agreement into knowledge when it begins with something unknown and puts together the conclusion and the steps in between from what is unknown?" It becomes evident here that the method of "hypothesis" draws conclusions from the *images* of Forms. However, only Forms themselves can be the proper bases of first principles. We are reminded here that "dialectic is the only inquiry that travels this road [within the intelligible realm], doing away with hypotheses and proceeding to the first principle itself, so as to be secure" (533b–d).

Book VI repeats a very similar thought on dialectic. With dialectic, the soul "makes its way to a first principle that is *not* a hypothesis, using forms themselves and making its investigation through them." Thus the reliance upon Forms, and not on their images, is what ultimately differentiates dialectic from the hypothetical investigations of the geometers. Dialectic thus ascends from the realm of hypotheses into the higher realm of Forms. It leaves behind the imperfect images of numbers and geometric shapes and contemplates the Form of each image, such as the Form of Square. In short, Forms, which are in the highest "subsection of the intelligible," are grasped "by the power of dialectic" and are used

as “the unhypothetical first principle of everything . . . Having grasped this principle, [the soul] reverses itself and, keeping hold of what follows from [the first principle], comes down to conclusion without making use of anything visible at all, but only of forms themselves, moving on from forms to forms, and ending in forms” (510b–d).

The model of dialectic presented here raises more questions than the answers it vaguely recommends.¹¹ This problem is compounded by the fact that Socrates offers varying accounts of dialectic. For instance, by drawing lessons from the allegory of the cave, he says the “song that dialectic sings” is “imitated by the power of sight.” In the visible realm, the curious soul begins its journey by first setting its gaze on shadows and reflections. Then the soul tries “to look at the animals themselves, the stars themselves, and, in the end, to the sun itself.” This upward movement of sense perception represents the soul’s observation of various degrees of sensible realities, which observation leads to various and higher degrees of *opinion* we have of them (532a).

Dialectic does something similar, but without using the sensuous powers. Socrates says, “Whenever someone tries through argument and apart from all sense perceptions to find the being itself of each thing and doesn’t give up until he grasps the good itself with understanding itself, he reaches the end of the intelligible, just as the other [procedure] reached the end of the visible.” This upward “journey” of the soul is, again, called “dialectic” (532a–b).

This last description coincides with what Socrates tells us in the allegory of the cave. The “last thing to be seen with the mind’s eye in the ‘knowable realm’” is “the form of the good.” Once “one has seen it, . . . one must conclude that it is the cause of all that is correct and beautiful in anything.” We are urged here to accept on faith this first principle. “Whether it is true or not, only the god knows” (517b–c).

In all these descriptions that Socrates has given of it, dialectic is linked to the apprehension of Forms. This common link is also manifest in the other briefer descriptions of dialectic. For instance, Socrates claims that any able “account of the being of each thing” is called “dialectical.” In other words, dialectic allows one to “judge things not in accordance with opinion but in accordance with being.” This requires distinguishing, “in an argument,” *being* “from everything else.” A dialectical argument should also be able to “survive all refutation” (534b–c). A few pages later, Socrates declares that “anyone who can achieve a unified vision is dialectical, and anyone who can’t isn’t” (537c). This requirement suggests that dialectic unifies (combines) many things that have the same essential *being* (or characteristic)

under a single Form. Similarly, and later on, Socrates says dialectic upholds "a single form in connection with many things to which we apply the same name" (596a). For instance, all beds are grounded by a single Form—namely, the Form of Bed (see the following).

All these descriptions of dialectic are actually brief restatements of the two core assumptions of the theory of Forms: there is a single Form for "many things to which we apply the same name," and Forms are the essential causes of such things. Causation necessarily implies the participation of a single Form in "many" like things. One way or another, the task of the dialectician is to discover Forms, the Form of Good above all, and to set them as the first principles of their knowledge.

What needs to be considered next is the relationship of Forms to the many things that are, we must now note, the "imitations" of Forms. It will be observed that there are different levels of imitation, applicable to both the essences and attributes of things. For instance, God makes the Form of Bed, a craftsman makes a bed that imitates this Form, and a painter imitates the works of the craftsman and of things found in nature (596e–597e). This view coincides with the one given in *Cratylus*: objects have essences that derive from Forms, and these essences are imitated by names and pictures. These various degrees of reality, or of imitation, coincide with various levels of cognition, as was described previously.

Various attributes of persons also entail different degrees of imitation. For instance, in book V, Socrates distinguishes a just person from "the just itself." He says a truly just person is one who "comes as close to" the Form of Justice "as possible" (472b). The justness found in different persons thus varies, depending on how well a person partakes of the Form of Justice. To my knowledge, Plato never sets Forms and their instances (i.e., imitations and copies) on the same ontological or epistemological footing.

Another example that illustrates this point is the following: "There are many beds and tables" and a single Form for each kind of furniture. A craftsman who makes a bed refers to the Form of Bed but does not make "the form itself." Thus "if he doesn't make the being of a bed, he isn't making that which [truly] is, but something which is like that which is, but is not it" (596a–597a). In this sense, the bedness of a bed *is not* the Form of Bed, but a bed cannot be a bed unless it partakes of the Form of Bed. This example indicates, too, that Forms and their images are not equivalent. This is to say, the Bed is not another bed that has bedness, and Justice is not the same as a just person who has the characteristic of justness.

In a manner that suggests his awareness of the third man argument (TMA) against his theory, Socrates goes out of his way to claim that God made only *one* Form for each class of things. For instance, he made only one Form for all beds. If “he made . . . two, then again [a third] one would come to light whose form they in turn would both possess, and *that* would be the one that is the being of a bed and not the other two” (597c).¹² He finds the creation of more than one Form for each class of things unnecessary and irrational—perhaps something that a rational God would not do. For this reason, he takes the single-Form claim to be axiomatically true.

There is, then, a single Form for each of many objects, attributes, and even actions. This implies that there are as many Forms as there are kinds of objects, attributes, and actions. There are also Forms of opposite attributes. For instance, “since the beautiful is the opposite of the ugly,” beautiful and ugly are two different kinds of attributes. Thus “each is one” kind and derives from its relevant single Form. “The same account is true of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the forms. Each of them itself is one.” Each single Form only appears to be many to nonphilosophers because it is manifest as many “everywhere in association with actions, bodies, and one another.” The lovers of sense perception are “unable to see” the difference between the Beautiful itself and the beauties in sensible things. Such people are living in a dreamlike state. The true philosophers, who are few in number, can cognize the difference between Forms and their manifold instances—between Forms and things that partake of them—and do not believe for a moment that what partakes of Forms are the same as Forms (476a–d).

Next, Socrates wants to “address” a “friend who does not believe in the beautiful itself,” which, we are reminded again, “remains always the same.” This “friend” also does not believe that, for instance, “the just [Form] is one.” This “lover of sights” believes only “in the many beautiful things” and many “just” things and does not “allow anyone to say that the beautiful itself is one or that the just is one.” The problem is not with the friend’s belief that there are many beautiful things *per se*. Socrates has already accepted the view that there are many beautiful things and beauties in such things. The problem is something else, and it is of a dual nature. First, as we have seen earlier, Socrates does not accept the belief that things and their attributes are *merely* many. Each category of many like things is grounded by a single Form. On the other hand, this friend *believes* that the many manifestations represent the truth. Consequently, he does not realize that the many qualities of things

are of a contradictory, intermediary nature. For instance, Socrates claims that each one of the “beautiful things” will also “appear ugly,” “just things . . . unjust,” and “pious things . . . impious.” The list also includes “doubles,” which are also “halves.” The “many bigs and smalls and lights and heavies” are no more real than their “opposites.” They appear in this manner because “each” one of the attributes *actually* “always [partakes of] both opposites,” and are, as such, intermediary entities (479a–b).

The foregoing discussions tell us three crucial things. First, Forms are not intermediaries and are thus not entangled in the perplexities of their instances. For instance, the numerical one—or any one thing—contains two halves and, as a whole, is the double of each one of its halves. Thus it entails contraries. However, the Form of One is not a thing of this kind; it is a pure entity without any contrary attributes. Second, true knowledge cannot be obtained from the intermediaries. If so, the “friend” and others who defend the “conventions of the majority” believe only in the intermediaries and thus only “opine.” They do not possess true knowledge. Philosophers, on the other hand, study Forms—that is, “the things themselves that are always the same in every respect.” For this reason, philosophers “are lovers of wisdom and knowledge” and are those who truly “know” (479d–480a). Third, it seems that Plato is here defending a view he adamantly rejected in *Phaedo*.

CONCLUSION

This last argument, much like everything else Socrates has told us in this chapter, sets Forms apart from, and places them above, their instances. Ontologically speaking, the instances are not *en par* with Forms. This ontological difference explains different degrees of cognition. The bottom line is that Forms are the proper objects of true knowledge, and dialectic is the proper method of obtaining such knowledge.

Even though Forms are set apart from their instances and “always remain the same,” they nevertheless participate in things. They do so in many objects of the same kind (e.g., many beds and tables), at different levels (e.g., different individuals are more or less just), and in a single attribute or action in “association” with “one another.” Because Forms are strictly intelligible and absolute, they are not in any way sensible, or composite, entities. For this reason, their participation in the many things neither makes them more or less than what they always are nor tears them into many separate pieces.

CHAPTER 2



PARMENIDES, PART I

INTRODUCTION

In *Parmenides*, part I, Socrates defends a theory of Forms (TF) that significantly overlaps with Plato's middle-period TF. Subsequently, Parmenides submits this TF to a round of criticisms. The popular scholarly wisdom is that Plato, through the mouth of Parmenides, intended to seriously criticize his earlier TF in *Parmenides*, with which he increasingly became dissatisfied.¹ However, scholars disagree on the precise nature and effectiveness of the presumed self-criticism.²

The serious-self-criticism claim is often supported by an unwarranted rationale, which is clearly revealed in a recent article: "Because it appears that Plato thought" the arguments against him were "valid," "we are justified in searching out whatever assumptions are necessary to justify" these arguments.³ This rationale takes for granted what needs to be proven in the first place. Through a close examination of part I, this chapter concludes that the most fundamental assumption of this rationale should not have been made in the first place—the evidence against the serious-self-criticism assumption is simply too overwhelming. Part I is clearly a satirical display of various objections to the TF, which are invalid, *non sequitur* reactions to the TF that smack of sophistry.

THE SETTING AND THE MAIN CHARACTERS OF *PARMENIDES*

Parmenides, a fictional construction by all accounts, is narrated by Cephalus. He visits Athens with the purpose of hearing from Antiphon (Plato's half brother) about a conversation, "which took place between

Socrates, Zeno, and Parmenides.” It is claimed that Pythodorus (the Athenian general and “a friend of Zeno”) had witnessed this conversation and narrated it to Antiphon enough times that the latter was able to memorize it in great detail. With some reluctance, Antiphon agrees to tell Cephalus and his friends the entire story (*Parmenides*, 126a–b).⁴ What follows is Cephalus’s account of the conversation, which is based on Pythodorus’s account, according to Antiphon.

We are told that Parmenides and Zeno came to Athens “at the great Panathenaea” and were hosted by Pythodorus. Socrates and several others visited them with the intention of hearing Zeno read from his treatise, which was brought to Athens for the first time. It is implied that only Socrates and two other unnamed persons were initially present at the gathering. Parmenides, Pythodorus, and Aristoteles (“one of the Thirty”) joined them after Zeno had finished reading from his treatise (126b–127d).

We only get several glimpses of what Zeno presumably read from his treatise. The first glimpse comes from Socrates, who quotes Zeno’s “first thesis of the first argument” as follows: “If being is many, it must be both like and unlike.” But “this is impossible, for neither can the like be unlike, nor the unlike like.” This argument is meant to reinforce Zeno’s attack on the “being of many,” though it is not entirely clear whether he is here objecting to the plurality of individual things, such as sticks and stones, or the plurality of the universe as a whole. However, it becomes rather clear in what follows that Zeno denies plurality *tout court*: “Being could not be many” (127d–e). It also becomes clear that Zeno defends Parmenides’s doctrine. The latter says in his poem, “nor is [the *one*] divisible, since it is all alike” (VIII.23).⁵

Socrates notices that Zeno’s objection to plurality coincides with the doctrine of Parmenides and makes this known to both Parmenides and Zeno:

I see, Parmenides, . . . that Zeno would like to be not only one with you in friendship but your second self in his writings too; he puts what you say in another way, and would fain make believe that he is telling us something which is new. For you, in your poems, say “The All is one,” and of this you adduce excellent proofs; and he on the other hand says “There is no many;” and on behalf of this he offers overwhelming evidence. You affirm unity, he denies plurality. And so you [Zeno and/or Parmenides] deceive the world into believing that you are saying different things when really you are saying much the same. This is a strain of art beyond the reach of most of us. (128a–b)

Three points are made in the previous passage: (1) Zeno and Parmenides defend essentially the same doctrine, (2) they both deceive the others into believing that (1) is not true, and (3) they both offer magnificent evidence to defend what amounts to the same doctrine. Since Socrates is about to launch an attack against Zeno's doctrine, it follows that his attack is also directed against Parmenides. If so, (3) is not a sincere assessment of the arguments of Zeno and Parmenides.

Zeno denies (2): "Although you [Socrates] are as keen as a Spartan hound in pursuing the track, you do not fully apprehend the true motive of the composition, which is not really such an artificial [deceptive] work as you imagine; for what you speak of was an accident; there was no pretense of a great purpose; nor any serious intention of deceiving the world." He then proceeds to confirm (1): "The truth is that these writings of mine were meant to protect the arguments of Parmenides against those who make fun of him, and seek to show the many ridiculous and contradictory results which, they suppose, follow from the affirmation of the one. My answer is addressed to the partisans of the many, whose attack I return with interest by retorting upon them that their hypothesis of the being of many, if carried out, appears to be still more ridiculous than the hypothesis [that] . . . the being [is only] one" (128c-d).

According to Zeno, what Socrates fails to realize is that he had composed his book with "the pugnacity of a young [man]," and not with "the ambition of an elder man," even though, "in other respects," Socrates's observations are correct. Zeno adds that "someone stole the copy, thus giving him no choice whether it should be published or not" (128c-e). Plato's intention of adding this piece of information is not immediately clear, though it clearly links the younger Zeno to a sophistical, contentious opposition to pluralism. Now that he is "nearly 40 years of age" (127b), has Zeno abandoned his pugnacious spirit? It is very difficult to infer the conclusion that Plato here intends to excuse Zeno's youthful zeal for controversy. After all, Zeno has just read his book publicly, and as we were told earlier, Pythodorus "had heard Zeno" read it before (127d). Thus Zeno continues to repeat the pugnacious, sophistical arguments of his book, which defend the doctrine of Parmenides, who is very intimately related to Zeno (127b, 128a).

That Plato here intends to depict Zeno as a sophist is reinforced by another piece of information Plato has given us earlier. Pythodorus is the host of the gathering in which our dialogue transpires. We were told that Pythodorus is Zeno's friend and has heard him read from his book before. Actually, according to Plato, Zeno was

Pythodorus's paid teacher,⁶ and we know that Plato thought getting paid to teach wisdom is one of the important traits of sophists. Indeed, Plato has at least once referred to such payments as "sophists' fees."⁷ In *Alcibiades*, Socrates tells Alcibiades that Pythodorus and Callias paid Zeno to instruct them on increasing their "fame and wisdom" (119a).⁸

Is it possible that Plato thought Parmenides was also a sophist? Besides Plato, other Greeks identified Parmenides's close allies with sophism. For instance, Isocrates placed Zeno and Melissus in the same camp with "sophists," such as Gorgias and Protagoras. This camp, Isocrates noted, produced cumbersome works in which these figures advanced absurd views, such as the following: the existing things do not exist (Gorgias—actually, Gorgias argued that *being* neither exists nor does not exist); the same thing is both possible and impossible (Zeno); and the infinite number of things in nature, as a whole, are one (Melissus). Instead of the truth, these men were only interested in enriching themselves by exploiting the youth. Their so-called philosophies were nothing more than eristic disputations.⁹ Although both Zeno and Melissus belonged firmly to the Eleatic camp of Parmenides, Isocrates does not mention the latter in this context.

Isocrates was their contemporary and must have been reflecting a commonly accepted view in Athens that Zeno and Melissus (both Eleatics) were sophists.¹⁰ Protagoras was known as the inventor of sophism, and we know that Gorgias was also a trenchant sophist. In fact, the method we find in Gorgias's *On Nature or the Non-Existent* is very similar to the method Plato attributes to Zeno and consequently the one Plato makes Parmenides exercise in part II. Plato certainly did not approve of Gorgias's method. He accuses him in *Phaedrus* of having little "respect" for "truth" and of arguing "concisely or at interminable length about anything and everything" (267a–b).

In *Phaedrus*, again, Plato says "the Palamedes of Elea" perplexes people by making "the same thing appear . . . like and unlike, or one and many, or again at rest and in motion" (261d). There is no historical record of an Eleatic Palamedes, who is clearly assumed here to be a sophist. We know of a Palamedes who participated in the Trojan War and was credited for the invention of many things, including jokes. The scholarly opinion is that Zeno is the Eleatic Palamedes. My guess is that scholars think the Eleatic Palamedes refers to Zeno and not to Parmenides, who, in a sophistical manner of perplexity mongering, makes "the same thing appear . . . like and unlike, or one and many, or again at rest and in motion." I will

not insist that Plato had Parmenides in mind in *Phaedrus*. I will insist, however, that Plato makes Parmenides make “the same thing appear . . . like and unlike, or one and many, or again at rest and in motion” in *Parmenides*, part II.

The first explicit mention of Parmenides’s name in Plato’s dialogues appears in *Symposium*, where he is mentioned, in *passim*, in two related passages. In the first passage, Phaedrus declares that Love is a great god, one of the first to be worshipped. He justifies his claims with the authority of Hesiod, Acusilaus, and Parmenides. The latter is quoted as saying, “And Love [Eros] she [the goddess] framed the first of all the gods” (178b). In the second passage, Socrates disagrees with Phaedrus by arguing that the “tales” of Hesiod and Parmenides are not credible at all (195c). Thus in his first appearance in Plato’s dialogues, Parmenides does not fare very well.

Parmenides is the first Platonic dialogue in which Parmenides’s doctrine is seriously considered. This fact suggests that Plato did not have much direct interest in Parmenides’s philosophy until he penned *Parmenides*. Regardless of what we think of the merits of Parmenides’s refutation of Socrates’s TF (to be decided in the following discussion), Plato clearly makes Parmenides engage in self-refutation in *Parmenides*. As we have seen, both Zeno and Parmenides defend the twin view that only the *one is* (alternatively, all is *one*) and that many cannot be.¹¹ However, after submitting Socrates’s TF to a round of criticisms, Parmenides ends up accepting the validity of Socrates’s theory. It is worth noting that he accepts the existence of multiple (a plurality of) Forms, and the fixed character (*being*) of the many (135b–c). Moreover, as I will amply illustrate in Chapter 3, Plato makes the fictional Parmenides contradict the historical Parmenides’s doctrine in a variety of ways in part II, and he does this by making him utilize Zeno’s magical method.

The facts presented in the previous paragraph question the often unquestioned popular assumption—namely, that Plato had too much respect for Parmenides to satirize him in *Parmenides*.¹² This popular view is based on a very selective, self-serving reading of *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* and on a fundamentally wrong misreading of *Parmenides*.

The relevant evidence is as follows: at the beginning of *Sophist*, upon meeting Socrates, Theodorus informs him that he has brought a guest (the Eleatic Stranger) with him, who is from Elea, and “belongs to the school of Parmenides and Zeno.” Socrates’s first reaction to this information is to assume that the Stranger may be the “very spirit of refutation.” Theodorus assures Socrates that he is “more reasonable than the devotees of verbal dispute” (216a–b).¹³ Clearly, the

association of the Eleatic Stranger with both Parmenides and Zeno has provoked Socrates to identify him with sophists.¹⁴

However, the Eleatic Stranger proves Socrates wrong. How? By thoroughly refuting Parmenides's doctrine (see Chapter 4). Thus *Sophist* amounts to another Platonic scheme in which an Eleatic refutes the doctrine of Parmenides. The presence of such a refutation in *Sophist* strongly suggests that Socrates is being sarcastic when he tell the Stranger that he had once met Parmenides and witnessed him develop "magnificent arguments" (*Sophist*, 217c). Furthermore, *Sophist* reveals more openly than any other dialogue that Parmenides's doctrine provides refuge for sophists. Thus it is not difficult to agree with Harold Cherniss when he says Plato thought Parmenides was "the fountain-head of all Sophistry."¹⁵

Scholars generally assume that Socrates's comment about having once met Parmenides refers to the fictional story in *Parmenides* and not to an actual meeting. The assumption that they never met cannot be definitively proven. Be that as it may, as we will see in this and the next chapter, the "magnificent" arguments we find in *Parmenides* are not magnificent at all. We find a similar claim about the said meeting, and a similar admiration for Parmenides, in *Theaetetus*. In this dialogue, Plato makes Socrates say, "There is one being whom I respect above all: Parmenides himself is in my eyes, as Homer says, a 'reverend and [awesome, or fearful]' figure. I met him when I was quite young and he quite elderly, and I thought there was a sort of depth in him that was altogether noble." While they refer to this passage generously, scholars generally omit what Socrates says next as he explains why he cannot deal with Parmenides's doctrine in *Theaetetus*: "I am afraid we might not understand [Parmenides's] words and still less follow the thought they express" (183e–184a). Likewise, in *Sophist*, Parmenides is explicitly included among those famed philosophers who "did not care" whether or not the others understood them (242c–243b). To say the least, Plato thought Parmenides was fundamentally unclear.

Moreover, Plato's elations of the wisdom of others are often marked by sarcasm. In *Theaetetus*, Socrates's reference to Protagoras as "the wisest man of all" turns out to be a joke. In *Euthydemus*, Socrates, in a thoroughly and obviously sarcastic manner, repeatedly expresses his admiration for the sophist Euthydemus and his brother and says he desires to become their "pupil." There are many more examples in Plato's dialogues of such sarcastic admirations for others, *Euthyphro* being another very obvious example. These dialogues basically tell us that we should not readily take Plato's elations literally.

Perhaps Parmenides was *not* “the greatest, in [Plato’s] estimation” after all, as Cornford maintains.¹⁶ We certainly cannot assume that Plato deemed Parmenides unassailable. If Parmenides is assailed in *Sophist*, then he is also assailable in *Parmenides*. In fact, he is assailed in *Parmenides*. Let us, then, not approach *Parmenides* with the highly questionable, even implausible, assumption that Plato had too much respect for Parmenides to submit him to some sort of satirical criticism. Let us settle this issue more firmly by assessing the merits of the “magnificent arguments” Plato puts into the fictional Parmenides’s mouth. I intend to illustrate throughout this book that, in Plato’s estimation, Parmenides’s arguments are not magnificent at all.

SOCRATES’S THEORY OF FORMS AND HIS CHALLENGE

In *Parmenides*, part I, Socrates claims, contrary to Zeno’s argument against plurality, that there is nothing absurd or strange about the hypothesis that *things* can be both like and unlike and one and many. Socrates reinforces his claim with his TF: a *thing* entails likeness and unlikeness by virtue of partaking of the Forms of Likeness and Unlikeness. Thus he asks Zeno rhetorically: “Do you not . . . [realize] that there is an idea [Form] of likeness in itself, and another [opposite] idea [Form] of unlikeness . . . and that ‘you and I and all other things,’ which we call ‘many,’ partake of these Forms?” Is it not also true that, by partaking of these Forms, these many things become “both like and unlike”? Socrates takes what he has just said to be very obvious: there is “nothing extraordinary” in demonstrating that the things that partake of the Forms of Likeness and Unlikeness “have both attributes of likeness and unlikeness in them” (128e–129a).

It is equally obvious to Socrates that ordinary, sensible *things* partake of the Forms of Unity and Many and are consequently one and many. For example, Socrates says the following:

If a person wanted to show that I was many he would say that I have a right and a left side, and a front and a back, and an upper and a lower half, for I cannot deny that I partake of multitude; when, on the other hand, he wants to prove that I am one, he will say, that we who are here assembled are seven [Socrates, Zeno, Parmenides, Pythodorus, Aristoteles, and two unnamed persons] and that I am one and partake of the one. In both instances he proves his case. So again, if a person shows

that such things as . . . [sticks and] stones, and the like, [*are* many and one], we admit that he [successfully] shows the coexistence of the one and many. (129a–129d)

In short, each sensible thing, because it partakes of the Form of Unity, is obviously *one* whole thing and also has *many* parts because it partakes of the Form of Many. Each thing also partakes of the Forms of Likeness and Unlikeness and is thus both like and unlike. These observations of the obvious suffice to refute Zeno.

However, the obvious points made here do not apply to Forms themselves. Socrates repeats this claim several times within this speech: “Now if a person could prove” that the Form of Likeness has unlikeness or that the Form of Unlikeness has likeness, that “would indeed be a wonder.” Also, if a person were to show that the Form of Unity is many or that the Form of Many has unity, he says, “I should be truly amazed.” In short, Socrates would be “surprised to hear that” each Form, itself by itself (*auto kath' hauto*), entailed its “opposite.” There are also such Forms as Rest, Motion, and others. If someone could show that such entities “admit of admixture and separation in themselves, I should be very much astonished” (128e–129e).

Socrates proceeds to turn these comments into an open challenge: “I should be far more amazed if anyone found in the [Forms] . . . themselves, which are apprehended by reason, the same puzzle and entanglement which you [Zeno and Parmenides] have shown to exist in visible [sensible] objects” (129e–130a). What Socrates opposes here more specifically is the compositeness and divisibility of each Form, especially their division into contrary characters. We should not overlook the fact that his challenge is an invitation for perplexity mongering: both Zeno and Parmenides have, in the past, created “puzzle and entanglement” for the visible, sensible objects. Socrates wants them to do the same for Forms.

THE EXTENT OF FORMS

After hearing Socrates's challenge, Parmenides is provoked enough to accept it. First, he asks Socrates whether he draws a “distinction between [Forms] in themselves and the things which partake of them.” Is there, for instance, a Form of Likeness “apart from the likeness which we possess?” Socrates readily admits that there are such Forms apart from their instances in the sensible things. Here, Socrates accepts both that Forms are not sensible objects and that they are distinct from their instances. Parmenides asks, are there also Forms “of

the just and the beautiful and the good, and of all that class?" Socrates says, "Yes" (130b).

Notice that Parmenides's questions are not meant to get Socrates to deny participation.¹⁷ By definition, in drawing the "distinction" between Forms and the "things which partake of them," Parmenides implies, and Socrates accepts, the view that there are Forms that can be set apart (distinguished by "reflection") from such things, which, nevertheless, partake of Forms. Parmenides is here exclusively interested in determining what sorts of things Socrates thinks have unique Forms.

Accordingly, he demands to know if there is also a Form of Man "apart from us," or a Form of Fire, or a Form of Water. Socrates says, "I am often undecided [in doubt] . . . as to whether I ought to include them or not." Is he, asks Parmenides, "equally undecided" about those kinds of "things," such as "hair, mud, dirt, or anything else which is vile and paltry," having their own Forms as "distinct from the actual objects with which we come into contact"? At first, Socrates is certain that "visible things like these are such as they appear to us" and that it would be absurd to assume that they have their own distinct Forms (130b–d).

As it turns out, Socrates is also unsure of what he has just said: "I sometimes get disturbed, and begin to think that there is nothing without" a Form. Thus he does not firmly deny Forms to such things. However, he says, "When I have taken up this position, I run away, because I am afraid that I may fall into a bottomless pit of nonsense, and perish; and so I return to the [Forms] of which I was just now speaking, and occupy myself with them." Parmenides assures him that he is in doubt because he is "still young; the time will come . . . when philosophy will have a firmer grasp of [him], and then [Socrates] will not despise even the meanest things" (130c–e).

The scant evidence we have on the issue of the extent of Forms indicates that Plato thought ordinary things, such as snow (*Phaedo*, 103d–e), beds and tables (*Republic*, 596a–b), and shuttles (*Cratylus*, 389b–c), had their distinct Forms. To my knowledge, Plato nowhere explicitly denies Forms to ordinary things.¹⁸ Moreover, the issue of the extent of Forms is simply dropped at this point and will not be taken up again in the rest of the dialogue.

Why was the issue of the extent of Forms even raised here in the first place? While we may never know the precise answer to this question,¹⁹ it is rather clear that the discussion on the extent of Forms sets the tone for the ensuing discussions in two respects. First, Parmenides has already established himself as a true philosopher at the expense of

the youthful Socrates. Whether or not Parmenides deserves this status remains to be seen. Second, Parmenides will create perplexities *only* for the Forms Socrates has accepted without any doubt. These are certainly the kinds of Forms that cannot easily be conceived of as sensible things.²⁰ There is a catch, however. Even though Parmenides will focus on the Forms approved by Socrates, he will still convert them into sensible objects or give them sensible qualities.

PARMENIDES'S CRITICISM OF THE PARTICIPATION THEORY

First, Parmenides wants to establish what Socrates's participation theory assumes: "But I should like to know whether you mean that there are certain [Forms] of which all other things partake, and from which they derive their names; that . . . [like things], for example, become [alike] because they partake of [the Forms of Likeness]; and great things become great, because they partake of [the Form of] greatness; and that just and beautiful things become just and beautiful, because they partake of [the Forms of] justice and beauty?" Socrates accepts this summary of his theory without any hesitation (131a). Basically, Plato's middle-period causation-participation theory of Forms has just been restated.

Next, Parmenides asks whether Socrates thinks "each individual partakes either of the whole of the [Form] or else of a part of [it]? Can there be any other mode of participation?" Socrates admits that there cannot be any other mode of participation, even though he should not have made this admission. In other words, does Socrates think the Form as a whole "is one, and yet, being one, is in each one of the many?" Socrates replies with a question: "Why not Parmenides?" Parmenides readily concludes from Socrates's question that the latter thinks "one and the same thing [Form] will exist as a whole at the same time in many separate individual [things], and will therefore be in a state of separation from itself" (131a-b).

The presumed dilemma of participation here is that a Form cannot participate in a plurality of things as a whole and still remain a whole. On the one hand, Parmenides implies that a Form, if it participates in many separate things as a whole, will become many wholes. On the other hand, if a Form participates in other things through its parts, it will be divided into many parts in many things and will no longer remain a single whole. The ensuing discussion focuses on the second dilemma.

The preceding dilemmas of participation only emanate from Parmenides's misguided question. Plato's Forms do not have divisible parts, nor does Socrates say anywhere in part I that they do. Indeed, as was noted previously, he has insisted that only the sensible things are divisible. For this reason, Socrates naturally denies the validity of Parmenides's conclusion. "No," replies Socrates. A Form would not be separated from itself and divided into many parts if it were "like the day which is one and the same in many places at once, and yet continuous with itself; in this way each idea may be one and the same in all at the same time" (131a–b).

In response, Parmenides says, "I like your way, Socrates, of making one in many places at once. You mean to say, that if I were to spread out a sail and cover a number of men, there would be one whole including many—is not that your meaning?" Socrates does not object to this new analogy, perhaps because it is not, as an analogy, contrary to his participation theory. Like the day, a sail may also be perceived to be one sail ("continuous with itself") over many separate individuals. If so, asks Parmenides, "Would you say that the whole sail includes [is over] each man, or a part of it only [is over each man], and [in the latter case,] different parts [are over] different men?" Since they are speaking of a sail now, Socrates concedes that only a part of the sail would be over each man, and thus different parts of it would be over many men. "Then," concludes Parmenides, Forms "themselves will be divisible, and things which [partake of] them will have a part of them only and not the whole [Form] existing in each of them." Socrates's response is telling: "That seems to follow." Parmenides presses him to accept that each Form "is really divisible and yet remains one," as his sail analogy has presumably proven. Socrates resolutely refuses to accept Parmenides's conclusion. "Certainly not," he responds (131b–c).

There are two main problems with Parmenides's reasoning here. First, the fact that the sail in question is actually divisible furnishes no conclusive proof in favor of Parmenides's conclusion that it must be actually divided, if it were to be over many individuals. Second, Parmenides's argument, as Harold Cherniss rightly points out, shifts Socrates's analogy to an "essentially different analogy of a sail-cloth."²¹ Socrates's day analogy, which many scholars unjustly deem "absurd"²² or an indication of his failure to recognize that Forms cannot be sensible things,²³ does not require the day, not to mention Forms, to be actually divided. Besides, he has repeatedly and flatly refused the divisibility of Forms earlier. Why would he now propose the view contrary

to his day analogy in which he repeats, once again, that each Form is "continuous with itself"?

Kenneth Sayre thinks Socrates's analogy is just fine. He points out very aptly that "if Plato had elected to have Parmenides pay due attention to Socrates' suggestion at this point, the character of the ensuing discussion might have been altered considerably."²⁴ I fully agree with Sayre's conjecture but add that Parmenides will not "pay due attention" to *any* clarification Socrates will propose in the following discussion. The reason for this is that Parmenides has accepted the task of creating perplexities for Socrates's TF. In other words, there is no palpable evidence in the dialogue to the effect that he has any interest in educating the young Socrates.

Despite Socrates's protest ("certainly not"), Parmenides continues to treat Socrates's Forms as actually divisible wholes and to draw unacceptable consequences from this premise. Obviously, this is not a legitimate procedure; one ought to not attribute consequences to someone else's argument by changing the premise of the argument. Yet this is what Parmenides does in the ensuing arguments. Moreover, his criticism of Socrates's theory combines this illegitimate procedure with obvious sophistries.

Accordingly, Parmenides now asks Socrates to "suppose" that he is to "divide" the Form of Largeness. According to Socrates's participation theory, Parmenides supposes, each one of the many large things is large because it receives "a portion" of the Form of Largeness. The problem, reasons Parmenides, is that since a portion is smaller than the whole, each portion of the Form of Largeness will be smaller than the Form itself and will thus entangle the Form with its opposite. This "is inconceivable," agrees Socrates (131c-d). Since Socrates does not assume that Forms are quantifiable objects, this objection is inapplicable to his TF.

Parmenides proceeds to produce two more perplexities, which smack of sophistry. The first perplexity has to do with the Form of Equality. The assumption here is that a portion of Equality is *less* than the Form of Equality. If so, the participation of this *less* portion in another thing will not make that thing equal to another thing. The unstated assumption here is that the portion in question will make the recipient thing smaller and not equal (131d).

Even if we accept the assumption that the Form of Equality has measurable portions, Parmenides's conclusion is flatly absurd. In the first place, it is not true that a portion of any magnitude will make the recipient thing less. In the second place, it is not true that the participation of that portion cannot make that thing equal to something else

or itself. More important, Parmenides's reasoning entails a familiar sophistry. The portion, which is said to be *less* than the Form, is taken to be a negative (*less*) measure. This identification of an attribute of something with its essential identity is a well-known sophistry.

The same sophistry is also at work in the next argument. "Or suppose one of us to have a portion of [the Form of] smallness," which is but only "a part" of the Form of Smallness. In this scenario, the Form of Smallness would be (1) "greater" than its part, and its part, which is taken out of it, or subtracted from it, would be smaller than the Form of Smallness. Furthermore, (2) "that to which the part . . . is added will be smaller and not greater than before" (131d–e).

Clearly, (1) by itself is meant to constitute a contradiction in which the Form of Smallness appears to be a large thing—that is, larger than its part. In (2), Parmenides reasons that if the participant portion of the Form of Smallness is added to a thing, it would make that thing smaller than it was before. Well, if making things small is the proper function of the Form of Smallness, why is this result unacceptable? The assumed answer here is that adding a portion of one thing to another thing, regardless of how small that portion is, is expected to make that other thing larger than it was before. However, in this case, it has made it *smaller*.²⁵ How is this even possible? Sophistry is the answer. Parmenides supposes that the subtracted part in question is a subtraction and is thus added to the other thing as a subtraction. In short, Parmenides actually subtracted the part from the thing ("one of us") under the guise of adding it.²⁶

Given these conclusions, Parmenides goes on to triumphantly ask, if Forms cannot participate in things either as parts or as wholes, then how will these things get a share of Forms? Socrates merely respond by saying, "You have asked a question which is not easily answered" (131d–e).

From the outset, Socrates has been criticized on the assumption that Forms participate in other things either as wholes or as parts. However, Socrates has stated in his challenge to Zeno and Parmenides that Forms are not divisible wholes with parts. He repeated this claim with his objection to Parmenides's sail analogy. Yet Parmenides went on to assume anyway that Socrates's Forms are divisible magnitudes.²⁷ It is thus unreasonable to blame Socrates for Parmenides's conversion of Forms into wholes with parts and sensible qualities, as do some scholars.²⁸ Moreover, even if we assume that Socrates treats his Forms as actually divisible wholes, no one should take seriously the conclusion that the participation of a part of the Form of Smallness would imply subtracting that part from the

thing in which it participates, thus making it smaller. Nor should one accept the conclusion that because a portion of Equality is *less* than this Form, the addition of this portion to another thing would make that thing *less*. Clearly, multilevel sophistry is involved in Parmenides's objections.

As for the middle-period TF, what Parmenides has just attributed to Socrates is the kind of causation theory Plato explicitly rejects in *Phaedo*, where he makes Socrates criticize the materialists precisely on the same grounds (96a–97b). Plato never treats Forms as material objects that would themselves somehow become larger or smaller by participating in sensible objects. He says in *Phaedrus* that Forms are “without color or shape” and cannot be “touched” (247c–e). In *Symposium*, he flatly denies the notion that the participation of the Form of Beauty in beautiful things would make this Form either “more or less,” precisely because he takes Forms to be absolute entities (211a–b). The main point of both Plato's divided line analogy and the allegory of the cave in *Republic* is that Forms are only intelligible entities and are not at all sensible things, which is the view Socrates has defended earlier when he distinguished Forms from the “visible” things by saying that the former are only “apprehended by reason” (130a). Overall, I think it would be utterly ludicrous for Plato to seriously criticize his TF on the grounds on which Parmenides has just criticized it.

There is, however, an implied joke in all this. It is not Socrates (here or in Plato's previous dialogues) but the historical Parmenides (like the fictional Parmenides here) who conflates his indivisible *One Being* with a whole with parts. Indeed, Plato has made Socrates describe each one of his Forms as indivisible, “continuous with itself.” This is meant to remind us of the historical Parmenides's use of almost the same terminology to describe his *One Being*. It is, he says in his poem, a “continuous one,” and it is indivisible (VIII.5, VIII.23). Yet he calls this *One Being* a “whole” (VIII.38), and unwittingly implies that it has parts, especially since he says it is “poised from the center in every direction, like the mass of a rounded sphere” (VIII.43–44). As we will see in Chapter 4, Plato, in *Sophist*, explicitly criticizes Parmenides for this confusion. Moreover, in part II, he makes Parmenides (with clearly satirical allusions to his poem) argue that the *one* cannot be a whole with parts (argument 1) and that it is precisely a whole with parts (argument 2). In short, Plato assumes that his audience is familiar with Parmenides's poem, and for this reason, would immediately recognize that it is Parmenides, and not Socrates, who is really on trial here.

INFINITE REGRESS OBJECTIONS AND MORE

Next, Parmenides induces three new perplexities from Socrates's theory. They all depend on the unwarranted equation of Forms with their instances. Before we proceed any further, let us be reminded of Parmenides's earlier summary of Socrates's TF, to which the latter has agreed. Socrates draws a "distinction" between Forms "in themselves and the things which partake of" Forms. For instance, the Forms of Likeness, Unity, and Many are to be set apart, distinguished, from the attributes of likeness, unity, and many, "which we possess" (130b). Socrates has clearly accepted not only that Forms are not sensible objects—they are only "apprehended by reason" (130a)—but also that they are distinct from their instances in these objects. Socrates will offer several additional ways in which the latter mode of distinction should be understood and will thus stick to his claim that Forms and their instances are not the same.

The first objection in the new series of assaults on the TF is prepared in the following way: Parmenides tells Socrates, "I imagine that the way in which you are led to assume one idea of each kind is as follows: You see a number of [large] objects, and when you look at them there seems to you to be one and the same [character] in them all; hence you conceive of [largeness] as one" (131e–132a). Socrates finds this restatement of his theory agreeable because he thinks all large *things*, insofar as they are large, partake of the single Form of Largeness. At any rate, Parmenides's restatement thus far is compatible with the TF.

However, Parmenides now asks Socrates to, in his "mind, . . . embrace in one view" the Form of Largeness and the other large things and "to compare them" in the same way he compared only the large things in the previous paragraph. Basically, he is asking Socrates to suppose that the Form of Largeness and other large things are the same in the sense that they all have the characteristic of largeness. If Socrates supposes this, will not yet another Form of Largeness "appear to be the source of all these [large things, which now include the Form of Largeness]?" (132a).

Parmenides's question harks back to the theory of participation. The Form of Largeness, via participation, is the "source," or cause, of the largeness found in many large things. Thus, since the Form of Largeness also is taken to be a large thing that has the character of largeness, just like large persons, sticks, and stones, it too must have its own "source" that makes it large. If so, yet another Form of Largeness will come into his mind's view "over and above all

these [large things, including the first Form of Largeness Socrates was asked to suppose], by virtue of which they will all be [large].” Since each new Form is also a large thing, the process needs to be repeated indefinitely. Hence the Form of Largeness, “instead of being one,” as Socrates’s theory supposes, “will be infinitely multiplied” (132a–b).

The appropriate interpretative issue here is not whether or not Plato’s TF is ultimately vulnerable to the infinite regress objection. Rather, it is the validity of the manner in which Parmenides makes this objection. As Socrates says in *Phaedo*, the TF is valid only “if you grant my assumption” and “admit” that there are such absolute entities as Forms (100b). Parmenides did not question Socrates’s assumption. Instead, he altered it by treating Forms as if they were ordinary things, even though he himself agreed at 130b that Socrates draws a distinction between Forms and the things that partake of them. Clearly, then, Parmenides’s infinite regress objection is fallacious, for it relies on ignoring the said distinction and thus treats the Form of Largeness as if it were an ordinary large thing. Parmenides will once again raise the infinite regress objection in the following discussion, which will occasion further commentary on this issue.

In response to Parmenides’s last objection, Socrates makes yet another effort to clarify what he means: Forms are “thoughts only, and have no proper existence except in our minds.” In this manner, each Form “may still be one” and thus avoid the last objection of “infinite multiplication” (132b).

What Socrates says here is ambiguously stated in the Greek.²⁹ I think it is very likely the case that Plato meant to repeat what Socrates stated earlier at 130a: Forms are only grasped by reason, and as such, they are distinct from the visible things. Parmenides himself will confirm at 135e that Socrates thinks Forms are “objects of thought.” This reading better explains why Socrates thinks his response avoids the infinite regress objection: Forms are not the same as visible, divisible things.

Parmenides first asks Socrates whether each one of these “thoughts” is one thought, yet a “thought of nothing.” Socrates says this is “impossible,” agreeing thus that such a “thought must be of something . . . which is” in fact “a certain single character” that is observed in many things. As noted earlier also, such a single character will be a Form (132b–c). Parmenides here understands Socrates to be saying that Forms are objects of thought; the thought we are examining is of a Form and not of nothing.

As far as Socrates is concerned, Parmenides's conclusion is acceptable on the ground that a Form is an object of thought.³⁰ However, Parmenides proceeds, fallaciously, to attribute to Socrates the view that a Form itself thinks. If a Form thinks and is the same as the instances that partake of it, it follows that the instances must also think, thus making thinkers out of the things that have these thinking instances. In Parmenides's words, "If you say that everything else [partakes of Forms], must you not say either that everything is made up of thoughts, and that all things think, or that they are thoughts" that do not think? Both options are irrational, says Socrates, and as we are about to see, he adds immediately that he means to say something other than what Parmenides is attributing to him here (132c).

The presumed perplexity is this: if we say Forms are acts of thinking and are also the same as their instances in things, then it follows that these instances must also be acts of thinking. If we say these acts of thinking are not thinking, we create a perplexity; if we say they are thinking, we create an absurdity by implying that the attributes of things think. However, Parmenides's objection is unwarranted. Socrates did not anywhere say that Forms think, including in his comment to the effect that Forms exist only in the mind. The objection has been wholly contrived by Parmenides for the sake of inducing another perplexity.

Let us remember that we are still assessing the serious-self-criticism claim. In all the dialogues discussed in Chapter 1, Forms are repeatedly and consistently described as objects of thought. They may be grasped by reflection, recollection, discourse, dialectic, in the afterlife, and what have you. All the same, Plato never makes Forms think. For this reason, it is impossible to believe that Plato, through Parmenides, is now seriously criticizing his own theory on account of making Forms think.

Moreover, even if we manage to somehow blame Socrates for thinking that Forms think, it does not follow that the things they think of must also think. The latter conclusion is only possible if we absurdly suppose (as does Parmenides) that (1) Forms think, and (2) they are the same as the things that partake of them and thus have likeness to them. As noted earlier, Parmenides's argument is based on known sophisms, which must have been familiar to Plato's audience. Here is an example of (1): In *Euthydemus*, the sophist Euthydemus asks Ctesippus if he sees the "clothes" he is wearing. Ctesippus confirms that he does. According to Euthydemus, if Ctesippus sees his clothes, then it must be the case that "these clothes are able to see" (300a). Here

is an example of (2) from the same dialogue: Euthydemus's brother, Dionysodurus, asks Socrates if beautiful things are "different from the beautiful." Socrates replies that beautiful things are different (drawing a distinction again) from "the beautiful itself [Form], but each of them has some beauty with it" and is thus like the Form of Beauty. Dionysodurus replies that if Socrates has "an ox" with him, he himself must be an ox, and since Socrates and Dionysodurus are together, they must be the same—that is, Socrates must also be Dionysodurus (300e–301a). This absurdity presumably applies to the relationship of the Form of Beauty to a thing that partakes of it and is thus like it. If the thing has (or is together with) something of the Form, it must be the same as the Form.

In response to Parmenides's last insinuation, Socrates retorts that Forms are, "as it were, patterns [or paradigms] fixed in nature, and other things are like them." Through partaking of Forms, other things come to resemble them (132d). This is basically a restatement of Plato's middle-period TF. Socrates just stated the imitation theory directly in response to Parmenides's previous objections. This means that he is reacting either against Parmenides's claim that Forms are the same as their instances (images) or against his claim that both Forms and their instances—because they are the same—think. There is no reason to choose only one of these two related options. Even a scant familiarity with the TF, and the image theory subsumed under it, will confirm that both of Parmenides's insinuations are inapplicable to the TF.

At any rate, Socrates has once again drawn a distinction between Forms and the things that partake of them. No one with good intentions toward the claim should assume that the copies and resemblances of an original, whatever the original may be, are the same as the original. Only the likes of Zeno will maintain that like things cannot be unlike in any sense and thus must be the same. Is Parmenides like Zeno in the Eleatic sense of likeness?

Parmenides responds to Socrates's new clarification in the typical manner—that is, by first asking correct questions and then drawing unwarranted conclusions: since Forms and their images are alike, and "that which is like cannot be conceived of as other than the like of like," Forms and their images must be like each other. Since he has said that a character is made in the likeness of the original Form, Socrates naturally agrees. Parmenides reasons from this that if "two things are alike," then (1) they both "must . . . partake of the same" Form, or alternatively, (2) they both must have "the same character" (132d–132e).³¹

These two alternative readings are compatible with each other: whereas (1) already assumes that the Form in question partakes of another Form, (2) does not *yet* make this assumption. Either way, Parmenides once again equates Forms and their like instances. Now he is ready to identify the like character of two things with the Form corresponding to that character. Thus he says that “that of which the two partake, and which makes them alike, [will] be the Form itself” (132d–132e).³² As it will soon become clear, what he means is that the attribute of likeness in two like things is the Form itself, which means that the instances and the Form are the same.

Accordingly, the ensuing conclusion Parmenides draws, which is produced in three steps, equates Forms with their images (i.e., characters): Forms and their images are alike, like *things* have the same characteristic, and what they have in common is the Form itself. Given this manufactured equivalence of Forms and their many like instances, Parmenides proceeds to level another infinite regress objection against Socrates: Forms and other things cannot be alike at all, “for if they are alike, some further [Form in their] likeness will always be coming to light, and if that be like anything else, another [Form will emerge]; and [hence] new [Forms] will be always arising, if the [Form] resembles that which partakes of it” (133a).

It follows that an infinite number of Forms are required to explain the imitation/participation theory. This requirement presumably contradicts Socrates’s claim that there is only a single Form for each of the many like characters found in sensible things. For this reason, Parmenides assures Socrates, “the theory, then, that other things participate in [Forms] by resemblance [or likeness], has to be given up, and some other mode of participation devised.” Socrates merely says, “It would seem so” (133a). At least participation is not deemed impossible *tout court*, though we are left in the dark about what “other mode of participation” could be devised.

Obviously, Socrates did not claim that the characteristic of a thing that is made in the likeness of a Form of which it partakes is “the form itself.” Instead, he said they “are likenesses,” which, via “participation,” or causation, are made to resemble the relevant Forms. Plato similarly argues in his previous dialogues that images in general cannot be the same as that which they are the images of. For instance, he says in *Cratylus* that “the image, if expressing in every point the entire reality, would no longer be an image” (432b–d). In *Republic*, he argues that the craftsman does not make the Form of Bed. He simply imitates, or uses as his pattern, this Form. Thus the craftsman “isn’t making that which is [the Form of Bed],

but something which is *like* that which is, but is *not it* [emphasis added]" (597a). On this ground of nonequivalence, and in the same context, Plato rejects the view that another Form of Bed is necessary (597c).

In all likelihood, Parmenides is here exercising an assumption that Plato has already attributed to both Zeno and Parmenides: "Like things cannot be unlike" in any sense, which, if we assume that some things are alike, means that these things must be the same. The origin of this claim can be found in the historical Parmenides's poem, which says "All are alike" without any distinction or division (VIII.24).

In short, as Cornford also notes, against the middle-period TF, "Parmenides' argument here is fallacious, as Plato must have been aware."³³ To put this differently, it is unreasonable to think that Plato is seriously criticizing his own theory on the ground that it assumes the sameness of Forms and their images found in sensible things. Parmenides simply deduced the infinite regress objection from the supposition he himself engendered—namely, that Forms and their images must be the same because they are alike.

RADICAL SEPARATION OF FORMS PROHIBITS KNOWLEDGE

Parmenides reminds Socrates of the "great . . . difficulty" entailed in "affirming" that Forms can be set apart as "absolute" entities that are what they are, separately, just by themselves. Socrates agrees that his affirmation leads to difficulties. It is not immediately clear why Parmenides now links all of Socrates's problems to the just-by-itself theory of Forms; nor is it clear which "great difficulty" he has in mind. Since almost all the difficulties he has noted previously have something to do with Socrates's theory of participation, we must suppose that he has all along been thinking that Socrates has a theory of participation. Thus he cannot be supposing now that Socrates's theory denies participation because it affirms the just-by-itself theory of Forms. As it turns out, this is exactly what Parmenides now assumes: "Let me say that as yet you [i.e., Socrates] only understand a small part of the difficulty which is involved" when you distinguish a separate Form for each "class of things" (133a).

However, Parmenides's explanation of the new, even graver, difficulty takes yet another strange turn. The ensuing objection to Socrates's theory is attributed to an unnamed "opponent," who would claim that, given Socrates's theory, Forms "cannot be known." The extent of Parmenides's commitment to this new

objection is not clear, though he will declare later on that it has some merit. The new difficulty is this: "If an opponent argues that these [Forms], being such as we say they ought to be [namely, just by themselves], must remain unknown, no one can prove to him that he is wrong, unless he who denies their existence be a man of great ability and knowledge, and is willing to follow a long and laborious demonstration" (133a–b).

Socrates requests an explanation. Parmenides says, "In the first place, I think, Socrates, that you, or anyone who maintains the existence of absolute essences [i.e., Forms that are themselves by themselves], will admit that they cannot exist in us." "No," replies Socrates, "for then they would no longer be absolute" entities (133c).³⁴ Socrates's admission is actually consistent with the pre-*Parmenides* TF, which holds that Forms *qua* Forms do not exist in this world. This admission, of course, does not commit Socrates to the claim that Forms do not participate in us, and in our world, as images of themselves.

Socrates (Plato) typically uses "themselves by themselves" or "itself by itself" to describe the autonomy of Forms—that is, their self-sustaining nature. Parmenides inflicts another category shift here and takes "itself by itself" to mean the radical separation of a Form. Given the radical separation assumption, reasons Parmenides, we have two completely unrelated universes. It follows from this that in one universe, Forms have relations only "among themselves" and thus obtain their being (or essential characteristic) "in relation to one another." In our universe, "the things which have the same names with [the relevant Forms], . . . only [relate] to one another" and are what they are (or obtain their names) only in relation to each other. In short, the complete separation of Forms from the worldly objects dictates two unrelated universes (133c–d).

Once again, Socrates requests a clarification. Parmenides attempts to provide one with an example but, instead of a clarification, plunges into a set of absurdities. On the one hand, he points out, of two persons who are entangled in a master-slave relationship, one of them is the master of the other, and the other is the slave of the master. However, the master is not the master of the Form of Slavery. Likewise, the slave is not the slave of the Form of Mastership. This is a strange example to illustrate the present difficulty. It implies the silly assumption that if the Forms of Mastership and Slavery were to participate in our world, the Form of Mastership would be the master of a slave, and the Form of Slavery would be the slave of a master. On the other hand, adds Parmenides—again on the assumption of radical separation—the Form of Mastership would only be the master of

the Form of Slavery, and vice versa. This, too, of course, is a very silly thing to say, for it is absurd to assume that one Idea could enslave another Idea. Perhaps, and very charitably read, Parmenides's intention here is to simply argue that Forms are what they are in relation to one another only, and the objects in our world are what they are in their mundane relations to one another only. Thus Forms "have nothing to do with us, nor [do] we [have anything to do] with them; they are concerned with themselves only, and we with ourselves" (133e–134a).

As it turns out, each Form is not simply by itself after all; each Form is what it is in relation to its contrary and not to itself. This is a strange admission for which Parmenides has not given any explanation. However, we cannot treat it merely as an anomaly. Parmenides's ensuing absurd explanation as to why knowledge is impossible depends on it. What we are left with now is the radical separation of Forms from our world but not of the Forms from each other. Given this radical separation thesis, as was already admitted, we have no access to Forms. If so, on the one hand, "the knowledge itself"—that is, the Form of Knowledge—would also remain in the realm of Forms and will only know other Forms. (He might mean there will be a specific Form of Knowledge for the knowledge of each specific Form.) On the other hand, "the knowledge which we have, will answer to the truth which we have; and again, each kind of knowledge which we have, will be a knowledge of each kind of being which we have." In short, since they are not in our world, we "cannot have" any knowledge of Forms. For this reason, all the Forms "we suppose to exist," such as the Forms of Beauty, Good, and so on, "are unknown to us." Only the Form of Knowledge can "severally" know these Forms (134a–c).

Here, Parmenides voices a strange view, which assumes that the Form of Knowledge is not an object of knowledge but something akin to a mind itself. It is capable of knowing other Forms. Earlier on in the dialogue (132c), Parmenides has ridiculed a similar idea, which he is now proposing as a formidable objection to Socrates's TF. Clearly, the idea that the Form of Knowledge is capable of knowing cannot be attributed Plato. In all likelihood, Plato is here making Parmenides voice a contemporary argument (see the following paragraph).

Parmenides warns next that, given the radical separation thesis, "there is a stranger consequence still." It is agreed "that absolute knowledge, if there is such a thing, must be a far more exact knowledge than our knowledge; and the same [is true] of [absolute] beauty,

and of the rest,” which too must be more perfect than the beauty we have. Rather abruptly, Parmenides asserts that if there is such a perfect knowledge, “no one is more likely than god to have [it].” In other words, we now learn that it is not the Form of Knowledge but gods who possess true knowledge by knowing this Form. Since Forms and worldly things are separate from one another completely, then it follows that the Forms of Knowledge and Mastership do not participate in our world. If so, even though gods would have absolute knowledge and mastership under our scheme of things, they still “cannot rule us, nor [their] knowledge know us, or any human thing; just as our authority does not extend to the gods, nor our knowledge know anything which is divine, so by parity of reason they, being gods, are not our masters, neither do they know the things of men.” Socrates finds depriving gods of any sort of knowledge about us quite strange (134c–e).

Clearly, the radical separation of Forms from us does not, by itself, warrant the conclusion that gods can neither know us nor have anything to do with us. This conclusion is valid only on the assumption that gods are subject to the same kind of separation with which they are detained in the universe of Forms. However, since neither Socrates nor Parmenides has said anything about where they are located, the “strange conclusion” remains strange in the sense that it was abruptly introduced. Why, then, would Plato allow Parmenides to toss gods into the mix here?

It is likely that the anonymous “opponent” has something to do with Xenophanes, or he may actually be Xenophanes himself. The claim that gods have nothing to do with us is often attributed to Xenophanes. It is supposed, and for good reasons, that he thought they do not “meddle in human affairs.”³⁵ As we know, Plato thought Xenophanes started the Eleatic school (*Sophist*, 242d), and it was widely supposed that Parmenides was his pupil. Probabilistically speaking, Plato’s intention here is to have Parmenides deem his teacher’s doctrine very strange, though not even on solid grounds. It is also possible that some Eleatic-inspired Megarics held similar views and separated Forms, if not gods, from us and from our world.³⁶

What is certain is that Plato never proposed the radical separation thesis, nor did he make Socrates propose it in *Parmenides*. For this reason, the present objection against the TF cannot be valid. In fact, Parmenides has been criticizing the TF all along for *having* a problematic theory of participation in the first place. Yet many scholars claim that Socrates deserves Parmenides’s present objection.³⁷ Moreover, as we have seen, the objection entails several ridiculous assumptions

that should not have been allowed by the awesome Parmenides in the first place.

THE METHOD

As Parmenides points out once again, the problems identified previously, and other unidentified ones, presumably stem from Socrates's TF, which, again presumably, treats Forms as entities by themselves in the sense that they do not participate in our world at all. As also mentioned earlier, given the radical-separation thesis, "he who hears what may be said" of Forms will be perplexed and, consequently, "deny the very existence of them." Or else, such an opponent would reason that "even if they do exist, . . . they must of necessity be unknown to man." Parmenides accepts that this opponent "will seem to have reason on his side, and as we were remarking just now, will be very difficult to convince." For the second time, he claims that "a man must be gifted with very considerable ability before he can learn that everything has a class and [a Form itself by itself]; and still [someone] more remarkable [to be able to discover] all these things for himself, and having thoroughly investigated them, . . . to teach them to others" (135a–b).

In a surprising turn of events, Parmenides now claims that "if a man, fixing his attention on these and the like difficulties, does away with [Forms]" and "will not admit that every individual thing has its own determinate [character], which is always one and the same, he will have nothing on which his mind can rest; and so he will utterly destroy the power of reasoning [or discourse]." He adds that Socrates is well aware of this problem (135b–c).

After all that has been said and done thus far, we are back to the beginning of the dialogue. Parmenides has accepted Socrates's theory without adding anything to it except unjustified perplexities that he has introduced along the way. By accepting the basics of Socrates's theory, Parmenides has also implicitly repudiated the Eleatic doctrine. He has now accepted the plurality of reality—of the multiplicity of Forms and the things that partake of them. However, Plato seems to have more, or something other, than this self-repudiation in store for Parmenides, who is about to reassert his philosophical superiority over Socrates in fantastic terms.

As seen previously, Parmenides thinks only someone even more remarkable than an exceptionally gifted person can know Forms and teach them to others (135b). Parmenides repeated this requirement at 133b. In making Parmenides repeat this requirement twice, Plato

clearly wishes to draw our attention to two things in this context. First, as it will become clear soon enough, Parmenides thinks he is this exceptionally remarkable man. This self-elevation is contrary to Plato's description of a true philosopher. Second, the person he will eventually pick to instruct (Aristoteles) is not known to have any remarkable gifts (more on this issue in the following discussion).

Parmenides now asks, "What is to become of philosophy? Whither shall we turn, if [Forms] are unknown?" Socrates admits that he cannot see the answer to this question at the present moment. Parmenides knows why Socrates is in this predicament: "I think that this arises, Socrates, out of your attempting to define the beautiful, the just, the good, and [Forms] generally, without sufficient previous training. I noticed your deficiency, when I heard you talking here with . . . Aristoteles, the day before yesterday. The impulse that carries you towards philosophy is assuredly noble and divine; but there is an art which is called by the vulgar 'idle talking,' and which is often imagined to be useless; in that you must train and exercise yourself, now that you are young, or truth will elude your grasp" (135c–d). Clearly, Parmenides thinks a stern education in this "idle talk" is required for grasping the "truth." Parmenides is about to describe the "idle talk," or method, in the following discussion and showcase it in part II. The fact that Plato does not exercise Parmenides's method in any other dialogue³⁸ suggests that he thought it was really idle and useless.³⁹ At any rate, what Plato makes Parmenides exercise in part II will certainly "elude" the "grasp" of Parmenides's aforementioned "truth."

Socrates asks, "What is the nature of this exercise, Parmenides, which you would recommend?" Parmenides responds, "That which you heard Zeno practicing," though with two modifications to it. The first modification, says Parmenides, was suggested by Socrates earlier when he challenged Zeno: "I give you credit for saying to him that you did not care to examine the perplexity in reference to visible things, or to consider the question that way; but only in reference to objects of thought, and to what may be called [Forms]." Socrates naturally approves and adds that "there appears . . . to be no difficulty in showing by [Zeno's] method that visible things are like and unlike and may experience anything" one pleases to attribute to them (135e).

This exchange between Parmenides and Socrates takes us directly back to the beginning of the dialogue. Socrates has just restated his commitment to the exact same argument he made against Zeno: sensible things are obviously "both like and unlike," and Forms are, as

Parmenides has just confirmed, "objects of thought." In short, Parmenides has just recommended Zeno's method with which to cover all reality, including Forms.⁴⁰ However, with a few exceptions, Parmenides will not generally be concerned with Socrates's (Plato's) Forms in part II. Besides, Parmenides's aforementioned reference to Forms does not necessarily refer to the Platonic Forms, for the historical Parmenides's poem also speaks of them.⁴¹

As for the second modification, if Socrates wants to be better trained, he "should go a step further [than Zeno], and consider" the following: (1) *If many are, what consequences would follow for the many themselves?* (2) *If many are, what consequences would follow for the one?* (3) *If the one is, what consequences would follow for the one itself?* (4) *If the one is, what consequences would follow for the many?* (5) *If many are not, what consequences would follow for the many themselves?* (6) *If many are not, what consequences would follow for the one?* (7) *If the one is not, what consequences would follow for the one itself?* And (8) *If the one is not, what consequences would follow for the many?* In addition, Socrates should consider the following hypotheses: "If likeness is or is not, what will be the consequences in either of these cases to the subjects of the hypothesis, and to other things, in relation both to themselves and to one another, and so of unlikeness; and the same holds good of motion and rest, of generation and destruction, and even of being and not-being" (136a–b).

As we will see in Chapter 3, the foregoing recommendations do not exactly describe the program Parmenides will follow in part II. Parmenides is here only giving a gist of the method, which he sums up as follows: "In a word, when you suppose anything to be or not to be, or to be in any way affected, you must look at the consequences in relation to the thing itself, and to any other things which you choose,—to each of them singly, to more than one, and to all; and so of other things, you must look at them in relation to themselves and to anything else which you suppose either to be or not to be, if you would train yourself perfectly and see the real truth" (136b–c). The method, then, is to apply to "anything" that may be supposed; it is not limited to Forms.

Understandably, Socrates protests that the method Parmenides has recommended "is a tremendous business." Besides, he does "not quite understand" how one is to proceed with the method. He asks Parmenides to choose "some hypothesis and go through the steps" himself so that Socrates can better understand him (136c). Note that Socrates is *not* asking Parmenides to demonstrate how he could avoid any of the objections presented in part I; nor is he asking Parmenides

to pick one of Socrates's own suppositions. Parmenides will in fact begin his demonstration of the method with his own (i.e., the historical Parmenides's) supposition, if the *one is*.

Parmenides initially declines Socrates's request. Socrates tries to get Zeno to demonstrate the method. Zeno passes the bucket back to Parmenides but not without adding several crucial clues Plato wants his audience to note. Zeno affirms that Parmenides "is quite right in saying that [Socrates is] hardly aware of the extent of the task which [Parmenides is] imposing on him." In other words, the method is even more burdensome than Socrates thought it was. He adds that "most people are not aware that this roundabout progress through all things is the only way in which the mind can attain truth and wisdom." Zeno's comment clearly implies that he already knows both the circuitous nature of the complex method and the truth. Importantly, Parmenides, not Zeno, is the originator of the method. This is clearly implied in Zeno's following request: "Parmenides, I join in the request of Socrates, that I may hear the process again which I have not heard for a long time." It is also implied in Zeno's depiction of the method as roundabout or circuitous. Zeno is here very likely referring to the historical Parmenides's poem, which says, "It is all one to me where I begin; for I shall come back again there" (III). With the encouragement of Pythodorus, Aristoteles, and "the whole company," Parmenides agrees to demonstrate the method he has prescribed (136c-e).

After assuming his new role of instructing the others on method and truth, Parmenides asks, "Where shall I begin? And what shall be our first hypothesis, if I am to attempt this laborious pastime? Shall I begin with myself, and take my own hypothesis, . . . and consider the consequences which follow on the supposition either of the being or of the not-being of one?" (137b). At a minimum, Parmenides clearly indicates here that he is committed now to "play" out the "game" by *beginning* with *his own* hypothesis. Parmenides's reference to the exercise as a "laborious game" may be a hint that Plato, once again, does not take it seriously.⁴²

It is also interesting that Parmenides has claimed twice, and Zeno has repeated the claim for the third time, that the laborious method, if adopted, would lead to the discovery of "truth." Since Parmenides has accepted the challenge to demonstrate the method himself, we naturally develop the expectation that he will, or at least intends to, deliver the "truth" in part II. This expectation will be dashed after we go through the entire, quite laborious and very game-like, text of part II.

ARISTOTELES REPLACES SOCRATES

At this point in the dialogue, Socrates completely disappears from the scene. I think the choice of Aristoteles to replace Socrates further informs Plato's intentions in part II. It is telling that Parmenides handpicks Aristoteles to replace Socrates. He states that his choice is based on the fact that Aristoteles is "the youngest" and thus "will not make difficulties, and will be the most likely to say what he thinks" (137b). Clearly, Aristoteles is not the man with wide experience. According to Parmenides's earlier statements, such a man is required to follow the laborious method. The dialogue is about to turn into a seemingly endless ranting in which Aristoteles becomes the yes-man of Parmenides. He may be "the most likely to say what he thinks" but will not really say much. He will certainly give no trouble to Parmenides. I infer from this that he is chosen for his naïveté.⁴³

There is another irony here: Socrates is replaced with a future member of the Thirty Tyrants. Aristoteles's membership, as we have seen, is duly noted by Plato at the beginning of the dialogue. We know from his *Seventh Letter* that Plato condemned the Thirty for trying to get Socrates involved in their "wicked deeds" (325a).⁴⁴ As also narrated in *Apology*, had their government "not fallen soon after" Socrates's refusal to obey them, the Thirty would have "probably" put him "to death" (32c-e).

In all likelihood, the choice of the young, inexperienced, wealthy future tyrant to replace Socrates is relevant to what Plato intends to accomplish next. Aristoteles, I argue, is the perfect candidate to passively receive a barrage of sophisms from Parmenides. It is a well-known fact that Plato always criticized sophists for targeting rich, young boys and the unwise. Aristoteles certainly fits the bill. He is about to receive a stern and strenuous instruction from Parmenides, which, as we will see, is filled with fallacies and absurdities. As Allen jokingly—but tellingly—points out, "Perhaps that is why [Aristoteles] later became one of the Thirty Tyrants."⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

For all the reasons stated in this chapter, I firmly agree with Taylor in that "the objections brought by Parmenides against the doctrine expounded by Socrates did not originate with Plato himself."⁴⁶ We have observed that many of the objections are demonstrably of Eleatic and sophist origin. Regardless of their origin, it must be concluded

that Parmenides's objections cannot be seen as Plato's attempt at serious self-criticism.

Moreover, we now enter a new phase in the dialogue. If Parmenides's task in part I was to create perplexities for the TF, he has now been commissioned to demonstrate the Eleatic method by exercising it on new hypotheses with the expectation that the method would deliver the "truth." The next chapter examines and evaluates how the new phase of the dialogue unfolds.

CHAPTER 3



PARMENIDES, PART II

INTRODUCTION

It is somewhat of a surprise to discover eight arguments and an appendix in part II. Parmenides's comments in the transitional stage do not clearly anticipate these arguments. The eight arguments are governed by eight hypotheses, or "suppositions" (henceforth, H1, H2, H3, etc.). If we ignore (for now) some of the anomalies and variations entailed in them, the first four arguments explore the consequences of the supposition, if the *one is* (positive supposition), and the last four consider the consequences of the supposition, if the *one is not* (negative supposition). Arguments 1 and 2 ask what the consequences are for the *one* itself, given the positive supposition. Arguments 3 and 4 consider the consequences of the positive supposition for the *others*. Arguments 5 and 6 consider the consequences that follow from the negative supposition for the *one* itself, and arguments 7 and 8 do the same for the *others*.

My general interpretation of part II differs fundamentally from most of the existing interpretations.¹ As I see it, only two of the eight arguments are attributable to Plato; neither one of them revises the middle-period theory of Forms (TF). Argument 3 is consistent with Plato's middle-period TF (argument 8 is the other Platonic argument). The *one* of argument 4 is also defined in a manner that resembles Plato's Form of Unity. However, to put this only negatively for now, argument 4 is not attributable to the middle-period Plato. Arguments 1, 2, 5, and 6 all satirize the doctrine of the historical Parmenides, though Protagoras is also implicated in argument 5. Argument 7 clearly satirizes the doctrine of Protagoras, and argument 8 directly criticizes Protagoras's doctrine in a Platonic manner.

All in all, part II neither offers any (new) positive doctrinal lessons² nor attempts to solve any of the so-called problems Parmenides has identified in part I.³ Plato's main intention in part II is to parody the doctrines of his opponents. Part II satirizes these doctrines by embellishing them—thanks to the method of Parmenides and Zeno—with rampant fallacies and absurdities.⁴ In short, I intend to illustrate in this chapter that part II is a multidimensional, satirical critique of the Eleatic and sophist doctrines.

ARGUMENT 1: IF THE *ONE* IS, IT IS NOTHING

Argument 1 is clearly about the historical Parmenides's doctrine and method. Parmenides has already told us that he would begin the "laborious game" with *his own* "supposition" (*Parmenides*, 137b).⁵ Accordingly, at 137c, he states his supposition for argument 1 (H1), which has been variously translated as "if there is a one" (e.g., Cornford's translation), "if unity is" (e.g., Allen's translation), "if it is one" (e.g., Gill and Ryan's translation), "if the one is" (Scolnicov's translations), "if there is one" (e.g., Sayre's translation), "if one is" (e.g., Jowett's and Turnbull's translation).⁶ What does Parmenides's supposition really say or mean? I argue that the question is Plato's overall answer. He thinks Parmenides's monism, as he defends it in his poem (henceforth, PP), is confusing, if not confused. Plato's ultimate purpose in argument 1 is to exploit this confusion in multiple ways.

Parmenides begins argument 1 by saying that if the *one is*, then it "cannot be many" (137c). This deduction sets the parameters of most of the ensuing deductions in the following discussion. The mutual exclusivity of the *one* and *many* proposed here draws directly from the doctrine attributed to Parmenides and Zeno at the beginning of the dialogue (128c–d, 129e–130a) and, as Sayre aptly notes, dictates that "the hypothesis with which Parmenides begins must exclude plurality in every respect."⁷

Parmenides's next deduction necessarily follows from the previous one: if it "cannot be many, . . . then the one cannot have parts, and cannot be a whole." If it were to have any number of parts, then it would be many, which, according to the first deduction (and the Eleatic doctrine), is impossible. By definition, such a *one* cannot be "a whole" either, for a whole is inconceivable without parts (137c–d). Given that the *one* "cannot be many," this conclusion is sound. Yet in fragment VIII.20–25 of PP, Parmenides speaks of (1) an indivisible *one* (or *being*), which is (2) nevertheless "all" that is held "together." This fragment is self-contradictory; it (1) implies that the *one* cannot

have parts, and (2) implies that it is a whole with parts. Yet, according to Plato, Eleatics say that the *one* and “the whole” are the same and that both terms exclude plurality (*Sophist*, 244d–e).

If the *one* does not have any parts, continues our Parmenides, then it cannot have a “beginning,” “an end,” or “a middle.” Without these three parts, the *one* will be “unlimited” in the sense that it will lack any sense of limit (137e). On the premise that the *one* “cannot be many,” this conclusion is also sound. It is also consistent with the Eleatic denial of plurality. Plato’s targets here are the statements in PP to the effect that the *one* has no beginning or end but is nevertheless *limited* (VIII.26), is bounded by limits (VIII.30), or cannot be unlimited (VIII.34). If the *one* is limited, then it has to be a whole of some kind, have the three aforementioned parts, and thus be many. In short, if Parmenides wanted to deny plurality, then he should not have attributed limit to the *one* in his poem, for limit makes possible the plurality of the *one*.

Furthermore, if it has limits and parts, the *one* must be capable of having a shape. Reversely put, if Parmenides wants to deny the possibility of plurality to the *one*, he has to also maintain that his *one* cannot have a shape. This is exactly what Plato makes the fictional Parmenides argue next. If the *one* “cannot be many,” then it also cannot have any shape, for having a shape would require the *one* to have limits and parts. More specifically, “It cannot partake either of round or straight . . . because the round is that of which all the extreme points are equidistant from the center.” The straight line “is that of which the center intercepts the view of the extremes” (137e). Given the premise that the *one* “cannot be many,” this is also both a sound deduction and consistent with the Eleatic denial of plurality. However, PP likens the *one* to a rounded *sphere* and says it is “equally poised from the center in every direction” (VIII.43–49). Obviously, these remarks imply that the *one* has both a shape and parts and is thus capable of being a whole. Plato, by quoting this passage in *Sophist*, openly tells us that Parmenides’s words imply that his *one* (or *being*) must be a whole with parts, even though the latter says it is only a whole, which is the same as his indivisible *one* (244e).

Furthermore, (1) the *one*, “being of such a nature, cannot be in any place, for it cannot be either in another or in itself.” This is because (2) “if it were in another, it would be encircled by that in which it was,” and therefore, (3) the container “would touch [the *one*] at many places and with many parts.” However, (4) “that which is one and indivisible, and does not partake of a circular [spherical] nature, cannot be touched all round in many places” (138a).

This argument moves from (1) to (4) rather abruptly. Consequently, it gives the unwarranted impression that (2) necessarily justifies (3). Clearly, the *one* can be in a container without having any contact with it. Moreover, (1) is merely taken for granted and is ignored in (4). In other words, before proceeding to (2) and then to (3), a step or two is necessary to justify (1)—that is, to explain why the *one* cannot be in another. Perhaps the justification is either that the container cannot exist unless we assume plurality of things or that the *one*, such as it is supposed, is incapable of being in a place. Parmenides will later on give a similar justification for the latter when he explains why the *one* cannot move into a place. Thus a possible justification for (1) is the following: if the *one* is not a whole with parts, it can neither be in a place nor be touched by something else.

The next argument is the counterpart of the previous one. Likewise, if the *one* “were in itself, it would also be contained by nothing else but itself.” However, “nothing can be in anything which does not contain it.” The implication here is that since the *one* “cannot be many,” there cannot be another self of the *one* that contains it, for this would imply that the *one* is “two” selves. The overall conclusion for the last two arguments is that “one cannot be anywhere, either in itself or in another” (138a–b). We are also meant to conclude that the *one*, which cannot be in anything, also cannot be touched. Given the premise that the *one* “cannot be many,” these conclusions are sound.

Here, Plato intends to make Parmenides bring another contradiction found in PP into sharp focus. PP says that “what is, is in contact with what is” and that “it is immovable in the bonds of mighty chains, . . . and thus it remaineth constant in its place; for hard necessity keeps it in the bonds of the limit that holds it fast on every side” (VIII.25–34). It also says that the *one* “rests in the self-same place” (VIII.29). These comments require the *one* both to be in a place and to be touched (“held”). These requirements flatly contradict Parmenides’s doctrine—namely, that the *one* “cannot be many.”

Also, the *one* we are supposing cannot be either in motion or at rest. If it were in motion, the *one* “would be either moved in place or changed in nature [i.e., would undergo character alteration]; for these are the only kinds of motion.” (This claim recalls PP, VIII.40–41.) If the latter, it would become something other than itself, which, again, would imply the multiplicity of the self. If it moves in or through a place, either (1) it is in different places at different times, or (2) it is revolving around, which requires it to have a center and extremities that revolve around the center. Since the *one*, which “cannot be many,” cannot have a center and extremities (parts), (2) is impossible.

Since moving from one place to another requires it to be in different places, and since it was also shown previously that it cannot be in another or in itself, (1) is also deemed impossible (138b–d).

However, to repeat, PP says, “It is complete on every side, equally poised from the center in every direction, like the mass of a rounded sphere” (VIII.44–49) and that “it rests in the self-same place” (VIII.29). An entity of this kind is capable of moving, even though it is not necessary for it to move. In other words, the Eleatic denial of the possibility of motion is undermined by PP’s description of the *one*. As we will see in the following discussion, and more firmly yet, PP actually both sets things in motion and also denies all forms of motion.

Jowett’s translation of the following arguments does not clearly distinguish two different types of motion and/or change from each other—namely, coming into being (becoming) and coming into something (locomotion). Perhaps Plato meant to have Parmenides voice a similar confusion found in the doctrine of the historical Parmenides.⁸ At any rate, consistently with many other translations of the present argument, I will assume that the argument is about the impossibility of locomotion.

Moreover, adds Parmenides, the *one* cannot come to be in anything because something that is in the process of coming into “anything, can neither as yet be [altogether] in that other thing while still coming into being, [or, alternatively, while still coming to be in it,] nor be altogether out of it, if [it is] already coming into being [or coming to be] in it.” In other words, “whatever comes into being [or to be] in another must have parts, and then one part may be in, and another part out of that other; but that which has no parts can never be at one and the same time neither wholly within nor wholly without anything.” Therefore, to sum up the conclusions of all the arguments about motion, the *one* cannot be in any sort of motion (138d–139a).

At a minimum, the foregoing arguments about motion are reducible to the claim that the *one* cannot be in any sort of motion unless it is a whole with parts. Parmenides is here bringing into sharp focus, without any relief, another contradiction found in his poem. PP clearly denies any sense of motion (VIII.20). Yet it speak of “the origin of all the things” (X) and of “whence they arose” (XI). These comments clearly imply some sense of becoming. PP also speaks of the “course of all things” (XII) and of Eros’s “wandering round the earth” (XIV), which clearly imply locomotion.

In a roundabout manner, Parmenides also argues that the *one* he is supposing cannot be at rest. This is because, as it has already been

established, the *one* cannot be "in itself, and . . . in another." Since being at rest requires it to be in the same place, and since it cannot be in itself or in another, the *one* cannot be at rest (139a-b). Given its premise, this is a sound argument. However, it violently contradicts PP, which says the *one* is "immovable" and thus "rests in the self-same place, abiding in itself always at rest" (VIII.25-29). In short, if we believe Parmenides's poem, the *one* is both in itself (two selves!) and always at rest in a place, even though his dictum, the *one* "cannot be many," requires him to deny both of these possibilities.

In the next set of deductions, Parmenides sets out to prove that if the *one* "cannot be many," it will neither "be the same with itself or other [things]; nor again, other than [different from] itself or other." This conclusion is overstated. Even though he will do this later on, Parmenides does not here attempt to prove that the *one* cannot be different from another thing. What he is aiming to prove at this point in the text is the conclusion that the *one* "will not be the same as another or other than itself." In the first place, (1) it cannot be "other than itself" (different from itself) and still remain *one*. In a parallel manner, (2) if the *one* were the same as another thing, "it would be that other, and not itself." It follows that the *one* "will not be the same as another or other than itself" (139b-c).

The reason (1) and (2) are impossible is not sufficiently explained. Perhaps it is implied that if the *one* were the same as another or different from itself, it would be many. Or it might be that these conditions would imply something other than the *one* we are supposing. That the *one* cannot be the same as another thing is sound by definition. That the *one* cannot be different from itself depends on the supposition that it "cannot be many" at all or that it is simply itself by itself, which is the same thing. It is highly likely that this latter supposition is maintained here, for Parmenides will explicitly introduce it in the following discussion.

Given the same supposition, the next deduction is also sound: the *one* cannot be "other than other, while it remains one." This is to say, it cannot be different from something else if it is simply *one*. As I read it, the convoluted explanation for this deduction emphasizes the point that "by virtue of being one" or "by virtue of itself," difference cannot be predicated on the *one* without making it many. In this sense, it cannot have the character of difference, for we are supposing that it cannot be many (139c). In the same bare sense of the *one*, the conclusion is sound, though the meaningfulness of such a *one*, which *cannot* have any relations whatsoever, is highly questionable.⁹

For similar reasons as the ones given in the previous argument, the *one* also cannot be “the same with itself.” If the *one* were the same with itself, it would again have multiple characteristics. Parmenides’s point is that the *one*, itself by itself, does not imply the character of sameness. This point is strongly implied in the following four proofs: “Surely the nature of the one is not the nature of the same”; “It is not when anything becomes the same with anything that it becomes one”; “If there were no difference between the one and the same, when a thing became the same, it would always become one; and when it became one, the same”; and “If one be the same with itself, it is not one with itself, and will therefore be [both] one and also not one [i.e., same].” Therefore, the *one* cannot have the relation of sameness to itself (139c–e). Since the *one* Parmenides is supposing is nothing else but *one*, and since “one” and “same” are obviously different terms, this conclusion is sound. However, PP says that “it is the same” as itself (VIII.29). Quite possibly, Plato is here, and in the following discussion, telling the Eleatics that even though they deny the existence of plurality, they necessarily imply plurality every time they predicate the *one*—even with sameness.¹⁰

Moreover, the *one* cannot be “like . . . or unlike itself or [an] other.” The unnecessarily laborious reasoning given for the ensuing deductions parallels the reasoning of the previous arguments. Somewhat ambiguously, it is supposed at first that being alike implies being the same in some specific respect. Since “sameness has been shown to be of a nature distinct from oneness” in the foregoing argument and, again as shown, since having a character “distinct from oneness” would make it “more than one,” it is “impossible” for the *one* to be like anything. It follows that the *one* cannot “be the same [in a specific respect] either with another or with itself.” By virtue of the fact that being alike means being the same in some respect, or being affected in that respect, the *one* cannot be like anything (139e–140b). On the assumption that H1 says the *one* is simply itself (or “oneness”), this argument is also sound. However, PP says that “it is all alike” (VIII.24) and thus implies that the *one* has additional characteristics in relation to itself, “all” other things, or both.

Also, the *one* cannot be unlike itself or another. This conclusion is also laboriously supported. Simply stated, to be unlike (different) implies being both like and unlike. This is because being unlike either itself or another means having the same character of unlikeness (hence having likeness in the respect of being unlike) as something else. However, once again, the *one*, such as it has been supposed, can “never” be “otherwise” (140b). The assertion that the *one* can *never*

be *otherwise* lends itself to the conclusion that we can never say anything of it except that it is simply *one*. Even though it is absurd, this conclusion is sound because it is consistent with its premise. It is also consistent with Parmenides's strict monism.

The claim that the *one* can "never" be "otherwise" poses a major problem for the historical Parmenides. On the one hand, (1) he criticizes the mortals for assuming that light and dark are "distinct from one another" (VIII.55–59) and consistently proposes the view that all is "a continuous one" (VIII.5). On the other hand, (2) he speaks of many different things, such as the round-faced moon, the stars, the Milky Way, circles filled with unmixed fire, males, females, gods, and so on. In other words, the dictum Plato attributes to Parmenides—namely, that all things are one¹¹—is defended in PP in a self-contradictory manner. In order to be a consistent monist, Parmenides has to stay away from (2).

Also, "being of this nature [i.e., itself by itself], [the *one*] can neither be equal nor unequal either to itself or to other" things. It cannot be equal "because the one, if equal, must be of the same measures as that to which it is equal." Since, as we have seen, it cannot be the same in any respect and since being equal implies a sense of sameness (i.e., likeness), the *one* cannot be equal to anything. Also, it cannot be greater or less than (unequal to) anything. This is because, in relation to things that are "commensurable with it," it "will have more measures than that which is less [than it], and fewer [measures] than that which is greater [it]." In relation to things that are *not* "commensurable with it," it will have fewer measures in one case and more measures in the other. Either way, the *one* would have more or fewer parts (plurality of measures). Since the *one* "cannot be many," this is impossible. Also, "if it were of one measure [only], it would be equal to that measure; yet it has been shown to be incapable of equality." It follows from all this that the *one* "will neither partake of one measure, nor of many, nor of few, nor of the same at all, nor be equal to itself or another; nor be greater or less than itself, or other" (140b–d). As we have seen earlier (cf. VIII.43 and VIII.48–49), Parmenides says in his poem that the *one* is either of one measure, equal with itself, or possibly of many equal measures, beaming "in all directions" from its center. Either way, he is implying measure as well as equality, which contradicts his denial of plurality.

The *one* that we are supposing, claims Parmenides, also cannot be "older, or younger than . . . or of the same age with" anything "because that which is of the same age with itself or other, must partake of equality or likeness of time; and we said that the one did not

partake either of equality or of likeness . . . and we also said that it did not partake of inequality or unlikeness.” If so, the *one* “cannot be older or younger, or of the same age, either with itself or with another,” for being of the same age implies equality and likeness, and being younger or older implies inequality and unlikeness (140e–141a).

This argument is both sound and consistent with certain declarations of PP. The latter critically says, “According to men’s [false] opinions, did things come into being, and thus they are now. In time (they think) they will grow up and pass away” (XIX). It is also consistent with fragment VIII.21–22, which says, “Becoming extinguished and passing away (is) not to be heard of (or spoken).” However, fragment VIII.36 says, “There is not, and never shall be, any time other, than that which is present,” which implies that the *one* is always in the present and, for this reason, is of the same age as itself. Also, fragment XIII says, “First of all the gods she (the Goddess) contrived Eros,” which implies both that Eros is older than the other gods and that there are other times after the “first” time in which he was contrived.

Parmenides says next that if it “cannot be older or younger, or of the same age” as anything, the *one* “cannot be in time at all” (again, this conclusion contradicts fragment VIII.36, as discussed in the previous paragraph). Also, “that which is in time [must] be always growing older than itself,” but, implies Parmenides, we have said that it cannot *be* older (141a). These are sound conclusions and suffice to conclude that the *one* we are supposing cannot be in time. Yet Plato makes Parmenides belabor the age relations of the *one*. Why? I am convinced that, at this point in the dialogue, Plato wishes to introduce a new dimension to his satire of Parmenides. The target here is Parmenides’s method, which is surely capable of producing tricky fallacies.

In this spirit, a trick is smuggled into Parmenides’s reasoning at this point. First, Parmenides offers several clarifications, the purpose of which is to establish presumably parallel correlations: (1) “a thing does not need to become different from another thing which is already different, it *is* [already] different.” In other words, a thing *is* only different from something that *is* different from it. Also, (2) if it “has become [different], it has [already] become different”; (3) if it “will be [different], it will be different”; and (4) “the only different possible [for becoming different] is one which is becoming [different].” Accordingly, and repeating the reasoning of (1), Parmenides says, (5) “that which is older must always be older [different in this sense] than something which is younger.” Repeating (2), and assuming parallelism with (1), he also says, (6) “that which becomes older than itself, also becomes at the same time younger than itself.” Repeating (4) and

the said parallelism with (1), Parmenides adds that it is necessary for that which is becoming older not only "to have something to become older than" it but also to have something that is becoming "younger" than it. In short, that which is becoming older is necessarily becoming younger than itself (141a-c).

Clearly, (5) is true in some sense: since "older" is a relational term, I can only *be* older if I am older *than* another thing, which must *be* younger than me. However, in relation to myself, I *am* only older than what I *was* before. In other words, my younger self no longer is in the present. Put differently, it cannot be said that I am older than I am now.¹² Moreover, *becoming* older and *becoming* younger are not necessary correlates, as are *being* older and *being* younger. By assuming that they are such correlates, Parmenides is saying, in effect, that I can only increase in age if I am also decreasing in age, which is false. Besides the falsity of the correlation, nothing can ever be in a process of becoming younger, which, properly speaking, means going back in time.

Parmenides adds that it is also "true that it cannot become [or age] for a longer or for a shorter time than itself," for it "must become, and be, and have become, and be about to be, for the same time with itself." If so, "things which are in time . . . must in every case . . . be of the same age with themselves" (141c-d). This deduction is both sound and true. However, Parmenides adds that because they occupy the same amount of time, things "must also become at once older and younger than themselves." Again, the assumption here is that in order to *be* older, the *one* must have something to *be* older than and that this correlation is the equivalent of the correlation between *to become* older and *to become* younger. However, the present argument adds another dimension, which makes its conclusion implausible. Even if we accept that *to become* older requires the *one to become* younger than itself in some special sense, it is still absurd to say that the *one* becomes older or younger than itself, for the premise of the present conclusion is that these two selves are in time for an equal duration.

Parmenides denies all these age-related conclusions, not because they are absurd, but because the *one* cannot have any of these age/time-related "affections." Therefore, it "does not partake of time, and is not in any time." Aristoteles's response to this conclusion includes an important detail, which becomes relevant later on: the conclusion is "so [as] the argument shows," or proves. If it is not in time, so goes the "argument," it cannot have such affections as "was," and 'has become,' and 'was becoming,'" which imply being in the past, or the affections of "'will be,' 'will become,' 'will have become,'" which

imply being in the future, or the affections of “‘is,’ or ‘becomes,’” which imply being in the present. In other words, “if the one is absolutely without participation in time, it never had become, or was becoming, or was at any time, or is now become or is becoming, or is, or will become, or will have become, or will be, hereafter” (141d–e). Given the premise that the *one* is not in time, this is a perfectly legitimate conclusion.

However, this legitimate conclusion is a preparation for another fallacy: since there is no possible way of having any sense of *being* “other than these” aforementioned time modes, the *one* “cannot possibly partake of being.” This means that “the one is not at all,” for, if it *is*, “it would already be.” Therefore, the *one* “neither is nor is one.” I will call this “the fatal conclusion” in the following discussion. (I am assuming that Parmenides is simply saying that if the *one* has no *being*, then it cannot even be one. In other words, I am assuming that he is not saying the *one* cannot be conceived by itself, apart from its *being*, which would not only be a fallacious statement but also contradict his earlier deductions.) However, we must note an important clue that Plato makes Parmenides add to his reasoning: the fatal conclusion follows that “if the argument is to be trusted” (141e–142a).

This clue is meant to remind us that perhaps we should not trust the present “argument”: Parmenides says, in effect, that there is no other way of *being* except being in time, which is clearly false.¹³ In short, (1) if the *one* is a nonexistent entity, then the fatal conclusion is fallacious. If, on the other hand, (2) the *one* is an existential entity, the conclusion is valid. However, if it is an existential entity, then Parmenides had no right to say it could not possibly be in time, or be many, and so on.¹⁴ Either way, there is a fundamental fallacy in argument 1. I think (1) is intended here because it has serious implications for what follows.

The historical Parmenides, whom our Parmenides is openly representing here, cannot say the fatal conclusion is fallacious. For one thing, his poem says that the *one* (or *being*) “is the same thing that can be thought and for the sake of which the thought exists” (VIII.34–36, VI.1–3). Therefore, he has to accept that “the thought” of the fictional Parmenides—namely, the fatal conclusion both *is* and *true*. Even if he manages to somehow avoid the problem of equating thought and *being*, the historical Parmenides still has to say his *one* does not *have* any *being*, for saying otherwise would amount to the admission of plurality. In other words, Plato is not letting him get away with the equation of *one* and *being*, an equation that Plato elsewhere attributes to the historical Parmenides.¹⁵

Our Parmenides concludes that, given the fatal conclusion, we cannot say that the *one* “admits of [any] attribute or relation.” If so, “there is no name, nor expression, nor perception, nor opinion, nor knowledge of it . . . Then, it is neither named, nor expressed, nor opined, nor known, nor does anything that is perceive it.” Aristotle agrees both with this conclusion and with Parmenides’s next comment, which says, “All this . . . [cannot] be true about the one” (142a).

It is clear enough that our Parmenides does not reject the fatal conclusion. We must remember an important fact, which is often ignored by scholars: the agreement between Parmenides and his audience is that, regardless of what they are, they must “agree” on the validity of all “consequences” for any supposition he exercises (142b).¹⁶ This is the reason Parmenides will accept all conclusions and include them in his general conclusion at the end of *Parmenides*. Yet we cannot ignore the fact that he *does* openly say that the fatal conclusion cannot be true of the *one*.¹⁷ In other words, the “argument” is to be trusted and the fatal conclusion accepted, even though it is unacceptable. In a word, he must accept the unacceptable: if the *one is*, then the *one is nothing*, which, as Miller aptly puts it, is a “logically achieved absurdity.”¹⁸

By accepting and rejecting the fatal conclusion, our Parmenides has created a multilayered trap for the historical Parmenides. The former’s comment, “Consequently, it cannot *have* a name or be spoken of,” is directly derived from PP, which claims that it is impossible to know or even “utter” that which *is not* (II.7–8). To ask rhetorically, did he not just now “utter” that “the one is not at all”? Did he not also “utter” that this conclusion “is not” true of the *one*?

Moreover, by both accepting and rejecting the fatal conclusion, Parmenides has repeated what PP disparages as the confusion of the “wandering minds”: “Being and Non-Being are regarded as the same thing” and as “not the same thing” (VI.8–9). In effect, Parmenides has ended argument 1 by regarding “the *one is*” and “the *one is not*” as the same thing and also as not the same thing. He must accept this perplexity because his argument (method) is to be trusted, and as he and Zeno advertised it several times in part I, it is the only method with which “truth” can be discovered (135d, 136c, 136e).

In conclusion, argument 1 creates a multilayered perplexity for the historical Parmenides’s doctrine. Moreover, Parmenides has made it abundantly clear that argument 1 exercises his own supposition by using his own method. Besides, we have seen that argument 1 derives most of its material from Parmenides’s poem. For these reasons, argument 1 is about Parmenides’s doctrine and not about Plato’s TF, even

though it may have certain implications for the latter. Regardless of what these implications may or may not be, we cannot find a legitimate criticism of the TF in argument 1. For one thing, argument 1 says nothing of the participation of Forms, which, according to the TF, is their way of becoming many without compromising their indivisibility. Instead, it denies the possibility of plurality altogether. In short, it takes a considerable stretching of argument 1 to turn it against the TF.¹⁹

ARGUMENT 2: IF THE *ONE* HAS *BEING*, IT CAN BE AND NOT BE ALL THINGS

Preliminary Remarks

Argument 2 is by far the lengthiest of all eight arguments. Parmenides now recommends that they “return once more to the original hypothesis” and see if their method can yield different consequences for the supposition that the *one is*. Regardless of what they are, they must accept all the consequences that follow for the *one* (142b). Clearly, H2, like H1, also refers to the historical Parmenides’s supposition to which we are now returning once again.

However, H2 is immediately given a different direction than the direction given to H1. If the *one is*, it cannot “be, and not partake of being.” If so, “the one will have being, but its being will not be the same with the one.” In other words, the *is* in the Eleatic supposition is now treated as the predicate of the *one* on the dual assumption that the *one* partakes of *being* and that “being has not the same significance as one.” To be clear, Plato is not making Parmenides say that this is the only legitimate way to understand the supposition. It could also mean “the one is one”—that is, it is self-identical. But the latter, which was assumed in argument 1, is not our current supposition. In short, H2 means that the *one* “partakes of being,” or it has *being* (142b–c).

The dual interpretations of the Eleatic hypothesis in arguments 1 and 2 reflect the ambivalent nature of this hypothesis, for which, as Cornford rightly points out, “Parmenides can be held responsible.”²⁰ Indeed, as Aristotle notes, sophists used to “fight about words, e.g., whether the meaning of being and the one is the same in all their applications or different; for some think that being and one mean the same [as in argument 1]; while others solve the argument of Zeno and Parmenides by asserting that being and one are used in a number of ways,”²¹ as in argument 2, and thus have different meanings.

Plato took care of the first possible meaning in argument 1. With the aid of the Eleatic method of argumentation, he led the first possible interpretation of the Eleatic hypothesis to naught. Here, he intends to make Parmenides show that the second possible meaning of his supposition leads to consequences for the *one* that fundamentally contradict his denial of plurality. That this is what Plato intends to do here is clearly indicated in *Sophist*, where he has the Eleatic Stranger point out that the second version of Parmenides's supposition leads to all sorts of perplexing consequences (245d; for a more elaborate discussion, see Chapter 4).

Argument 2 first proceeds with sound arguments to point out these perplexities. If "one is" means "one has being," then Parmenides must concede that his *one* is capable of all manner of plurality. The onslaught of fallacies begins in the later sections of argument 2, where, so I claim, Plato begins to mock Parmenides's (and Zeno's) highly prized method of argumentation by producing deliberate fallacies. These fallacies are too many and too obvious to be treated as honest mistakes on Plato's part. Instead, they clearly indicate that Plato is highly capable of playing the laborious game of sophistry against his opponents and thus pays them back in the same currency with which the likes of Zeno, as Zeno himself indicated earlier (128c-d), attacked the others.

Last, let us also anticipate here that argument 2 cannot be about Platonic Forms. If not for the reasons given previously, too many of the characteristics attributed to the *one*, as described in the following sections, make it impossible to accept the claim that the *one* of H2 refers to Plato's Forms. I will point out many of these attributes in due course.

The *One* Is a Whole with Parts

To begin with, "if being and one are not the same," and when we say the *one* is, "being is predicated of the one," then the *one* we are supposing must "itself be, and have for its parts, one [oneness or unity] and being." Since "the word 'part'" necessarily implies "the word 'whole,'" for it is inconceivable to be parts without being parts of a whole, then the *one* we are supposing, since it has at least two parts (oneness and *being*), must be a whole with parts (142c-d). In short, H2 necessitates the conclusion that the *one* is a whole with at least two parts (moments): oneness and *being*. One of the two parts (oneness) has been prematurely deduced. Since Parmenides will soundly bring

oneness out of *being* in the following discussion, we may accept the present conclusion as valid.

The same reasoning given in the preceding paragraph, adds Parmenides, requires us to treat each part of the *one* as a whole in its own right. This is because the two parts necessarily entail one another: *being* the part-*one* means the part-*one* has both *being* (implied in *being* a part) and oneness and being a part-*being* means the part-*being* has both oneness (implied in being a part) and *being*. "Thus, each of the parts also has in turn both one and being, and is at the least made up of two parts; and the same principle goes on forever, and every part [of each part necessarily] . . . has always these two parts"—namely, oneness and *being*. It follows from this premise that both the *one* and any one of its parts, "if it is, must be infinite in multiplicity"—that is, it must be unlimited in multitude (142e–143a). This conclusion is true of any *one* whole but is not true of Plato's Forms.²²

Parmenides proceeds "in another direction" to illustrate the same claim, though the purpose now is to secure the presence of a third category (or part). If we "abstract the one which, as we say, partakes of being, and try to imagine it apart from . . . [*being*], this abstract one [will] be [only] one." In other words, since it is possible to conceive of the oneness of a thing apart from its *being*, we must concede that these two terms are different from (or other than) one another. It is also interesting that the possibility of conceiving oneness and *being* just by themselves is admitted here. Thus we are allowed to think legitimately that, in an abstract sense, "one is one," and "being is being." However, we must note, "It is not because the one is one that it is other than being; nor because being is being that it is other than the one . . . they differ from one another in virtue of otherness and difference" (143a–b). Then difference also permeates through all the parts of the *one* as a whole.

The One Has Infinite Parts and Numbers

Parmenides says next that we can take any two of the three categories as a pair: *being-difference*, *being-one*, and *one-difference*. When we speak of any one of the three pairs as a whole, we are "in each case speaking of 'both.'" Anything that is called *both* implies that it is "two." Any *two*, or *pair*, or *both*, however, is still "one" whole. We are, after all, speaking of a pair of two parts. Thus each pair derived from the three terms must be a whole—that is, a unity with at least two parts at the same time. Now that one and two have been derived, we can also deduce "three" with the "addition of any one to any pair."

Since two is even and three is odd, the *one* also entails evenness and oddness (143c–d). Clearly, this statement cannot be true of Plato's Form of Unity, for Plato never admits that a Form can entail, or be predicated of, opposites, such as odd and even.

Because two and three are its parts, the *one* must also entail addition and multiplication. If addition and multiplication are granted, all numbers can be deduced from the *one*, which has already been shown to entail one, two, and three.²³ In other words, "if there are two," then "there must also be twice, and if there are three there must be thrice; that is, if twice one makes two, and thrice one three." Thus multiplication is assumed to be inherent in these numbers and, by extension, in the *one*, as much as addition was assumed to inhere in these numbers (from the addition of one part to a pair of parts). Moreover, if two *is*, and implies *multiplication*, then there "must be twice two." Since the same reasoning is true for three and thrice, "there must be thrice three." All these calculations are meant to endorse the conclusion that if the *one* is, "number must also be." Indeed, all possible numbers must exist, if the *one* has *being* (143d–144a). (Parmenides's formula does not account for all the prime numbers. Perhaps this is a simple oversight on Plato's part.)

Parmenides's next move is problematic also: if number is, "there must also be many, and infinite multiplicity of being; for number is infinite in multiplicity, and partakes also of being." The proof of the claim that there must be an "infinite multiplicity of beings" requires more than the haphazard statement that this is just so because number "partakes also of being." With this unwarranted assumption in mind, Parmenides adds that "being is distributed over the whole multitude of things, and nothing that is, however small or however great, is devoid of [*being*]" (144a–b). Notice that Parmenides does not say, in a Pythagorean manner, that number is the *being* of all things of all possible sizes. He has jumped from each number having *being* to everything else having *being* as well. We may charitably think that this is another oversight and not an intended fallacy by Plato.²⁴

As it turns out, the number theory was unnecessary for the last conclusion. Parmenides adds that it is "absurd" to suppose that anything that *is*, is completely "devoid of being." With this proviso, we are back to the beginning of argument 2. It was supposed earlier that the *one* has both *being* and unity, and each one of these parts is necessarily split into two, *ad infinitum*. If so, we are now told that *being* is divided into an infinite number of parts and thus "has the greatest number of parts." (This last assertion is unacceptable, for, as was shown earlier, oneness also has an infinite number of parts.

Parmenides will notice this in the following discussion and withdraw the assertion.) Since each part is a part, it must be one thing; that is to say, it cannot be nothing. Once again, it follows that, regardless of how large or small it may be, “every single part of being” entails oneness (144b–c).

Here, oneness is shown to have an infinite number of parts from a novel angle. Being one whole thing, it cannot “be in many places at the same time.” Since it cannot be in many separate places at the same time and since it is attached to the infinite parts of *being* severally, the *one* itself must be “divided” into an equal (infinite) number of parts as *being*. Simply put, the only way for something to be present to an infinite number of other things, which are separate parts, is through its division into as many parts. In short, since oneness “is never wanting to being, or being to [oneness],” *being* and oneness must be of equal number—that is, both must be equally infinite in the number of parts they have. It follows that “we were wrong in saying just now, that being was distributed into the greatest number of parts”—that is, into a greater number of parts than anything else, including oneness (144d–e).

In conclusion, since each one of its two parts is infinitely many, the *one* as a whole, which contains these parts, must also be infinitely many. From this, it follows that it too must have not only an equal number of parts as itself but also an equal number (i.e., infinite) of parts as each one of its parts, and as each one of the parts of its parts, *ad infinitum*.

The One Has Limit and Shape

Even though the *one* is indefinitely numerous within itself, it remains a limited entity externally, says Parmenides. Since the *one* is a whole, its parts must be contained in it. As contained, the *one* must “be limited.” If so, the *one*, when considered as a whole, has a limit and, when considered as parts, is unlimited. Parmenides’s overall reasoning thus far requires us to admit that each part of the *one* is also both limited and unlimited. Because it has limits, the *one* must also have extremities. Besides, as a whole with parts and limits, it must have a “beginning and middle and end,” for nothing can “be a whole without these three” parts. Reversely put, a whole cannot lack a beginning, middle, or end. If it has a middle, the middle must “be equidistant from the extremes.” Since the *one* is an entity of this kind, it must have some sort of a shape, such as straight or round, or a combination of the two (144e–145b).

Clearly, Parmenides cannot be speaking of the Platonic Form of Unity here (or of Forms in general). This is because he has given the *one* sensible qualities, actual divisibility, and a geometrical shape. If the Form of Unity (or any other Form) is assumed here, we have the right to ask, what is the shape of the Idea of Unity? In short, if we assume that Forms are meant, the conclusion is absurd.²⁵ However, I do not think the description of the *one*, as it is given thus far, is absurd. It is clear that the present description soundly follows from the *one* of H2 but cannot follow from the Form of Unity.

The *One* in Space and in Itself (Beginning of Fallacies)

Parmenides adds that the *one*, as it has been described, must be “in itself” and “in another.” This conclusion is made possible by the treatment of the *one* as a limited container that contains its parts within itself. If the *one* is both the container (whole) and all the contained parts, it “will be in itself” (145b–c).

Parmenides is to show next that, on the other hand, “the whole is . . . neither in all the parts, nor in some one of them,” and, consequently, cannot be in itself. This conclusion directly contradicts the previous one. It is endorsed with the following reasoning: “If it is in all [of its parts], it must be in [each] one [part]; for if there were any one [part] in which it was not, it could not be in all the parts.” Parmenides deduces from this premise the conclusion that the whole cannot be in all its parts because it cannot be in each one of the parts individually. On the same ground, he adds that the *one*, as a whole, cannot be in only “some of the parts” either. If the whole were in some of the parts, “the greater would be in the less, which is impossible.” In conclusion, “if the whole is neither in one [part], nor in more than one [parts], nor in all of the parts, it must be in something else, or cease to be anywhere at all.” Since the whole *is*, it cannot be nowhere because this would imply that it is “nothing.” Therefore, since the *one is* and since it is a whole, “it must be in another” but not in itself. To sum up both arguments, “Regarded as a whole, [the *one*] is in another, but [when] regarded as being all its parts, [it] is in itself; and therefore the one must be . . . in itself and also in another” (145c–e).

Notice that the deduction, which says the *one*, as a whole, cannot be in “all” of its parts, was merely derived from the claim that the *one* can fit into neither any one nor “some” of its parts. For the sake of clarity, let us express this argument numerically. Suppose the whole is ten square feet, and contains ten parts, each part being one square

foot. Parmenides reasons correctly that ten square feet cannot fit into anything fewer than ten square feet. However, he deduces from this reasoning the absurd conclusion that since it cannot fit into any one part or several parts of itself, it is impossible for it to fit into all its parts and thus be in itself. Is Parmenides here discussing yet another sense of the *one*, or a whole-part relationship?²⁶ This does not matter, for the reasoning of the argument is fallacious and smacks of sophistry. By definition, any given whole and its parts are already given as having the same magnitude. Furthermore, and for the same reason, it is absurd to conclude that the *one* cannot be in all its parts because it cannot fit into one or several of its parts. He is saying, as it were, that I cannot fit into all my clothes because I, as a whole, cannot fit into my socks. We will observe a similar fallacy later when Parmenides discusses the magnitude of the *one*.

The conclusion that in order to *be*, the *one* must be in something else is possibly fallacious. It assumes categorically that the *one* would be “nothing” if it were not somewhere. This is not true of such entities as Forms. This possible fallacy can be avoided if we assume that Parmenides has in mind an existential whole.²⁷ If Parmenides has in mind such a whole, which he generally does in argument 2, we ought to not maintain that Parmenides is developing a theory of Forms in argument 2.²⁸

Motion and Rest

With the last argument, Parmenides has added space as a necessary category. The *one* that rests and moves must be in a place (space) in which it can rest and move. The existence of space is thus necessary for the next set of dual deductions: the *one*, “being of this nature, is of necessity both at rest and in motion.” Of the former, Parmenides says, the *one* is “at rest since it is in itself.” As it is in itself, it does not move out of itself and thus remains “in the same [place], which is itself.” Of course, “that which is ever in the same [place] must be ever at rest” (145e–146a).

This argument is fallacious. Parmenides is not saying it “might” be at rest when it is *in* itself.²⁹ He is saying it “must” be at rest. Clearly, being *in* itself does not require the *one* or any one thing to lack internal motion. Plato must have been aware of the present fallacy. As he argues in *Republic*, anything that has many parts can be both in motion and at rest at the same time, though not in the same respect (436c–d).

On the other hand, what is in another is never “in the same” and “if never in the same, never at rest, and if not at rest,” it must be “in motion.” In conclusion, “the one being always . . . in itself and [in] another, must always be both at rest [when it is in itself] and in motion [when it is in another]” (145e–146a). There is also no valid justification for the claim that the *one*, insofar as it is in another, “must always” be in motion.³⁰

The *One* Is the Same as and Different from Itself and the *Others*

Parmenides's following deductions give us a good sample of the “laborious game” (cf. 137b) he is playing. He reasons now that the *one* “must be the same with itself, and other than [different from] itself; and also the same with the others, and . . . [different from] the others.” “How so?” asks Aristoteles. Before answering Aristoteles, Parmenides creates a rule, which we must bear in mind as we read Parmenides's ensuing arguments. All things, he says, are either (1) the same or (2) different; “if neither the same nor [different],” then they must relate to each other as (3) “part to a whole” (146a–b). What Parmenides takes to be an exhaustive set of mutually exclusive relations here problematically excludes the possibilities of likeness and unlikeness.³¹

Parmenides utilizes the method of disjunctive syllogism to answer Aristoteles's question: If we rule out any two of these three relations, the remaining relation must be true of the *one*. The first relation to be proven is sameness. If sameness can be proven, the other two possibilities need to be ruled out. Since the *one* cannot be “a part of itself,” (1) it “cannot be related to itself as whole to part.” Also, since it cannot be other than itself, (2) it cannot be different from itself. If it neither is in a whole-part relationship with itself nor is different from itself, then the *one* must “be the same with itself” (146b–c). Both (1) and (2) are inconsistent with the main thrust of H2—namely, that the *one* is a whole with parts, which entail difference. No argument is provided to explain why these relations are denied here.

Next, Parmenides argues that the *one*, in one respect, is “in itself” and, in another respect, is “in another.” Since these are different respects of the *one*, it must be different from itself (146c). If it is different, it cannot be the same with itself, for we have been told that sameness and difference are mutually exclusive relations. If so, then Parmenides must be assuming two separate, different ones here, and he is thus not entitled to say the *one* is different from *itself*.³²

Moreover, Parmenides, as he has told us earlier, is operating on the assumption that the *one* is the same with itself, different from itself, or in a whole-part relationship with itself. Yet the present assumption that the *one* is both in itself and in another requires him to say the *one* is in a double whole-part relationship.

Thus far, Parmenides has concluded that the *one* is both the same with itself and different from itself. He will now consider the possible relations of the *one* to the *others*. Since, he reasons, “all” the other things that are “not one” must be different from the *one*, it follows that the *one* must also be different from them. Therefore, the *one* is different from “the others” (146c–d).

Here, the difference of the *one* from the *others* is decided exclusively on the ground that the latter are *not* ones. The available information suggests that “not one” means the absence of oneness (unity).³³ This is because Parmenides has made being “the same as” and “different from” mutually exclusive relations earlier and is about to say that “same” and “different” are contraries. If so, the *one* and the *others* must be different entirely, sharing no sense of likeness whatsoever. Since the *one* has *oneness*, the *others* must lack it. Of course, it is absurd for Parmenides to say the *one* and the *others* are *entirely* different, since, according to the foregoing arguments, if the *others are*, they must, like the *one*, also entail *being* and oneness.

Parmenides now wants to make the *one* the same as the *others* with two so-called proofs. The first proof confirms what I have been saying all along: sameness and difference are “opposites.” If so, they will never be in each other. Since it is never in what is “the same,” difference can never be in “anything that is” for any “duration of time.” This is because what *is*, is necessarily “the same” as itself, and since different and same are uncombinable opposites, difference cannot be in what is the same. Since both the *one* and the “not one” (the *others are*, difference is not to be in either the *one* or the *others*. In fact, it is not to be found in anything that *is*. Moreover, adds Parmenides, since the *one* and the *others* are not different by virtue of being what they *are*—namely, “one” and “not one”—what they *are* by their nature also cannot make them different. If so, the *one* and the *others* will “altogether escape” being different (146d–147a). This argument basically says that nothing is different, and hence the *one* and the not one are also not different.

Difference has been ruled out as a possible relation of the *one* and the *others*. Next, Parmenides intends to rule out the possibility of their whole-part relationship. With this aim in mind, he argues that the *one* and the *others* (not ones) are also strict opposites, which means that

"the not-one cannot partake of the one; otherwise it would not have been [entirely] not-one, but would have been in some way one." It is also stated that "the not-one" cannot "be," or "have," number, for if it were to have number, "it would not have been not-one at all." So the *others* are not one in any sense. Since they have no characteristics in common, the *others* also cannot be the parts of the *one*; nor can the *one* be a part of the *others*. If the *one* were a part of the *others*, it would introduce number and oneness into the *others*, which cannot in any sense be one or have oneness. If, on the other hand, the not ones were to be parts of the *one*, they would have to have oneness and number, for this is demanded of all parts by definition. It follows from these considerations that the *one* and the *others* also cannot be in a whole-part relationship (147a–b), basically because they are entirely different.

Since both difference and whole-part relationships have been ruled out, then, by disjunctive syllogism, the only possible option left for us is that the *one* and the *others* must be "the same with one another." If we add this conclusion to the previous conclusions of this section, we get the following conclusion: "[The *one*] is the same with itself and the others, and also . . . [different from] itself and the others" (147b).

The whole argument about the sameness of the *one* and the *others* is nothing more than sophistry. In the first step, Parmenides has argued that (1) the *one* and the *others* cannot in any sense be different, for difference is nowhere to be found in them. In the second step, he has argued that (2) they cannot be in a whole-part relationship because they are entirely different. Hence he has concluded that (3) the *one* and the *others* must be the same. Let us now ignore the faulty, disjunctive reasoning and follow the steps of this conclusion in the reverse order: (3) the *one* and the *others* are entirely the same (2) because they are entirely different and (1) because they cannot be different in any sense. Clearly, (2) contradicts both (1) and (3).

Relatedly, it has been objected that (2) makes all differences disappear between the *one* and the *others* and thus requires them to be the same. For this reason, (2) does not contradict (1) or (3).³⁴ This objection, even if we accept it, makes the argument even worse. It amounts to saying that the *one* and the not one are entirely the same. In fact, this is what (1) implies and (3) directly says. In short, Parmenides has pulled a trick on us. He has established the arbitrary rule that the *one* and the *others* must be in only one of three possible relations: the same, different, and whole-part. He has ruled out the second and third possibilities on contradictory grounds and arrived

at the conclusion that the *one* and the *others* must be the same. The whole argument is a blunder.³⁵

The *One* Is Like and Unlike Itself and the *Others*

In the next stretch of deductions, Parmenides wants to prove that the *one* is (1) like the *others*, (2) unlike the *others*, and (3) like and unlike itself.

As “we have seen” earlier, the *one* is entirely different from the *others*. Somehow, their difference is now quantified and said to be of equal amount or of the same degree (“neither more nor less”), and for this reason, they are said to be different from one another in a “like manner.” If the *one* and the *others* both have the “same” degree of difference—that is, the equitable character of being different, then the *one* and the *others*, just in that “respect” of being different, “must be entirely alike.” Parmenides goes out of his way here to clarify that the meaning of *different* cannot be altered. He then concludes from this that the *one* and the *others* are entirely alike because “they are entirely different,” thus dropping the “respect” qualification (147c–148a).³⁶

The jump in Parmenides’s reasoning here is obvious and silly. Basically, “as we have seen” (at 147a–b), (1) the *one* and the *others* are entirely different. We now establish that (2) they are different “in a like manner” or in a particular “respect.” Since the character of *different* always has the same meaning, it follows that (1) and (2) are equivalents. If so, *different in a particular respect* means *entirely different*. Since the *one* and the *others* are alike in the particular respect that they are different, the conclusion we arrive at is that they must be entirely alike because they are entirely different.

The ensuing arguments begin with several clarifications. First, “like” and “unlike” are opposites, as are “same” and “different.” Also, Parmenides has shown earlier that the *one* is “the same with the others.” Further, we have just seen that, in the respect in which the *one* is different from the *others*, it is “like” them in being different (148a–b).³⁷ These so-called clarifications, which contradict one another, are meant to inform the ensuing arguments.

Parmenides reasons that since the *one* is the same with the others, in this respect of being the same, “it will be unlike” the *others* due to the opposite property, which made the *one* and the *others* alike in the previous argument. Clearly, *difference* is the opposite property that made the *one* and the *others* entirely alike previously. Here, *difference* also plays a conspicuous function in making the *one*’s sameness with the *others* mean the *one*’s complete unlikeness with them (since

like and unlike are opposites, being unlike means lacking any sense of likeness). How is it even possible for the same things to be entirely unlike? Since Parmenides insisted previously that same and different *are* opposites, he means to say that *being the same* implies *being different* and thus produces the affection of unlikeness between the *one* and the *others*. As he explains further, being the “same will make [the *one*] unlike; otherwise [same] will not be the opposite [of different].” In other words, it is because of the fact that “same” and “different” are opposites that two same things are unlike. Likewise, *being different* (i.e., not being the same at all) produces the opposite affection of *being entirely alike*; otherwise, “different” would not be the opposite of “same.” In conclusion, “the one will be both like and unlike the others; like in so far as it is [different], and unlike in so far as it is the same” (148b–c). The whole argument is clearly an exercise in sophistry.³⁸

The preceding “argument” is accepted. But there is yet “another argument.” Insofar as the *one* has the same attribute as the *others*, in that respect, it does not have a different attribute. For this reason, or in the respect of having the same attribute, it “is not unlike” but “like” them instead. On the other hand, if it has a different attribute from the *others*, in that respect, it is unlike them. These are sound arguments. However, Parmenides adds that since “the one is the same with the others and . . . [different from] the others, on either of these two grounds, or on both of them, it will be both like and unlike the others” (148c–d).

This claim entails some mischief. One of the “grounds” of the present argument is that having the same attribute means not having a different attribute in that respect. On this ground alone, the *one* and the *others* cannot be both like and unlike. This is likewise the case with the second ground, which says, “If it has a different attribute from the *others*, in that respect, it is unlike them.” On this ground, too, the *one* and the *others* cannot be “both like and unlike the others.”

Since it has been shown earlier that the *one* is both the same as and different from itself, it must be both like and unlike itself, says Parmenides. This is a valid argument. If so, “on either [one] of these two grounds and on both of them, it will be like and unlike itself” (148d). Again, on one of the grounds alone, the *one* cannot be both like and unlike itself. Whether it can be both like and unlike itself on both grounds depends on the precise nature of these grounds, which is not sufficiently provided here.³⁹

Basically, and to wit, much like the Eleatic Palamedes, Parmenides has managed to make like things appear unlike and unlike things appear alike in the foregoing deductions.

The *One* Has and Does Not Have Contact with Itself and the *Others*

Next, Parmenides wants to prove that the *one* (1) has contact with the *others* (2) has contact with itself, (3) does not have contact with itself, and (4) does not have contact with the *others*.

The first two conclusions are explicitly, but somewhat problematically, derived from the deductions given at 145b–c: the *one* “was shown to be [both] in itself . . . [as] a whole” and also in the *others*. “In the others” is a substitute for the *one*’s existence in *another*, which, in the earlier deduction, was meant to be a place. Here, the *others* can also be conceived as a container that can contain the *one* (e.g., Socrates in a box) or as many other things that surround the *one* (e.g., Socrates among Parmenides and Zeno). Either way, claims Parmenides, the following conclusions can be made: “In so far as it is in other things, it would touch other things, but in so far as it is in itself it would be debarred from touching them, and would touch itself only.” In short, “the inference is that it would touch both” itself and the *others* but in different respects (148d–e). These are justifiable conclusions, though the lack of sufficient information on how the *one* is in itself and in the *others* makes it difficult to argue for or against them.⁴⁰

On a “new point of view,” continues Parmenides, “that which is to touch another (must) be next to that which it is to touch, and occupy the place . . . [adjacent] to that in which what it touches is situated.” If so, “the one, if it is to touch itself, ought to be situated next to itself, and occupy the place next to that in which itself is.” Given this proviso, in order to be able to touch itself, the *one* “should be two, and be in two places at once, and this, while it is one, will never happen.” It follows that “the one cannot touch itself any more than it can be two” separate things (148e–149a).

The premise of this uninteresting argument is clearly false. In order to be able to touch itself, a thing does not have to be adjacent to what it touches, which, in this case, is itself. Any flexible object can be made to touch its two extremities. The parts of a whole can be contiguous and touch each other, as Parmenides himself has just told us (148d–e); likewise, one could simply scratch one’s head while contemplating Parmenides’s present argument. Therefore, two separate things situated in two different places is not a prerequisite for making contact

and, consequently, it is not true that one thing cannot touch itself, provided that it has parts.

The next argument forbids any contact between the *one* and the *others*. Parmenides repeats that "whatever is to touch another must be in separation from, and next to, that which it is to touch, and no third thing can be between them." This premise is sound when we consider two different things, but for the reason given in the previous paragraph, the following statement is false: "Two things . . . at the least are necessary to make contact possible." Moreover, he sets up an additional erroneous rule by saying that "the contacts are [always] one less in number than the terms." Thus a single contact (c) requires having two terms (t) side by side, two contacts require three terms, and so on. In every case, reasons Parmenides, there will "always" be one more term than the number of contacts. This gives us the following formula: $c + 1 = t$. Since the *one* is only one term, it will have no contact because $c + 1 = 1$ and therefore, $c = 0$. Thus if there is only one thing, "there will be no contact" with another term (149a–c). Obviously, this formula ($c + 1 = t$) is not "always" valid. If we situate three coins triangularly, so as to make each coin touch the other two coins, each coin will make two contacts, and all three coins together will make three contacts. Was Plato unaware of the fact that he himself could touch two different things at once?⁴¹

Also, if "the others . . . are not one" in any sense, then there will be no contact whatsoever. In other words, if the *others* do not partake of the (number) one in any way, they will have neither a name nor any number. They will not be one or two at all. From this premise, Parmenides mischievously concludes that the *one* "alone is one, and two do not exist." Since "there are not two, there is not contact." Therefore, "neither does the one touch the others, nor the others the one, if there is no contact" (149c–d).

The foregoing argument is based on the following trick: without explicitly saying so, Parmenides has abolished the *others*, along with any sense of number in them. He then jumped to the conclusion that the *one* "alone is one," and there is no two. Apart from the business of touching, he had no right to deduce this conclusion, for if the *one is* (H2), it must have all the numbers, including two. In other words, by eliminating two along with the *others*, he expected to create the illusion that there are no two things in any sense, even within the *one*. Of course, if the *others* are nothing, then it is true that there would be nothing else besides the *one* and consequently no contact between the *one* and the *others*. But once again, it is not true that the *one* could not have any contact with itself. In order to prevent the *one* from having

any contact with itself, Parmenides has to eliminate its parts, which would amount to treating H2 as if it were H1. Any argument that switches its main supposition should not be taken seriously.⁴² However, I do not think Parmenides has made this switch here. He has simply attempted to create the illusion I just described.

The *One* Is Equal and Unequal to Itself and the *Others*

Next, Parmenides proceeds to investigate whether the *one* is both equal and unequal to (greater or smaller than) itself and the *others*. First, he gives us some definitions: the *one* and the *others* cannot be greater or smaller than each other simply by “virtue of their being the one and the others.” However, “if in addition to their being what they are they had equality, they would be equal to one another, or if the one had smallness and the others greatness, or the one had greatness and the others smallness—whichever kind had greatness would be greater, and whichever had smallness would be smaller” (149d–e).

In other words, if the *one* is simply one (*o*), and the *others* are simply not one (*n*), they cannot be equal to, greater than, or smaller than each other in any way because, by definition, they lack these characteristics. However, if both *o* and *n* possess a measure, such as equality (*e*), greatness (*g*), or smallness (*s*), then they *can* be equal to, or greater, or smaller than each other. The distinction between *o* and *n* seems to have no bearing on the following equations, which I derive from Parmenides’s present deductions: If *oe* and *ne*, then $o = n$. If *os* and *ng*, then $o < n$. If *og* and *ns*, then $o > n$.

Rather abruptly, Parmenides begins to speak about Forms here. “There . . . [must be] two such ideas [Forms] as greatness and smallness; for if they were not they could not be opposed to each other and be present in” the things that are (149e). That they are said to be opposite Forms is important to Parmenides’s ensuing arguments. “If . . . smallness is present in the one, it will be present either [1] in the whole or [2] in a part of [it].” If we suppose (1), then we must also suppose that either (a) smallness within the *one* must “be . . . co-equal and co-extensive with the whole [of] one,” or (b) it “will contain the one.” If (a), then smallness would be equal to the *one*. If (b), then smallness would be greater than the *one*. However, the Form of Smallness cannot “be equal to anything or greater than anything, and have the functions of [the Forms of] greatness and equality and not [have] its own function.” In this rather confusing argument, Parmenides presumably means to say that in the case of (a), Smallness would appear in the *one* as the latter’s attribute of equality, which is

the proper function of Equality, not of Smallness. Likewise, in the case of (b), Smallness would appear as the *one*'s attribute of greatness, which is the proper function of Greatness and not that of Smallness. Since it is "impossible" for Smallness to cause equality or greatness in a thing, it follows that (3) "smallness cannot be in the whole of one" (149e–150b). This argument resembles Parmenides's objection to Socrates's TF in part I (131d–e). It likewise assumes that Smallness is an entity with magnitude. One main difference is that Parmenides is here proposing this absurdity as a valid argument of his own.

The foregoing deductions inform the next deduction. Due to (3), the only possibility left is the participation of Smallness in "a part" of the *one* "only." Parmenides concludes now that (4) Smallness cannot participate in any of the parts of the *one* either, for if it were to do this, it would again "be equal to or greater than any part in which it is" and repeat the same difficulties as before. This is because each part is also a whole in its own right and, for this reason, is subject to the reasoning that brought us (3). Given (3) and (4), Smallness cannot participate in anything at all. If so, there can be nothing small since the participation of Smallness in a thing is required for it to be small. It further follows from this that there will not be "anything small," except for the Form of Smallness (150b). This, of course, is a *doubly* absurd conclusion, which says that *nothing is small*, except the Form of Smallness, which *is a small thing*.

Moreover, Greatness (Largeness) also cannot be in the *one* or anything else. Parmenides reasons now that Largeness can only participate in another thing, such as the *one*, if there is also smallness in that thing. The reasoning here is that, in order for something to be large, there has to be something relatively smaller in addition to it and that this is even required of one single thing. (To give an example, an elephant can only be a large thing if its largeness is larger than the smallness present in the elephant.) However, this "is impossible," since, as we have seen previously, "smallness is wholly absent" in the *one* and in everything else (150b–c).

It follows from the foregoing deductions that nothing, including the *one*, is small except the Form of Smallness, and nothing is large except the Form of Largeness. Accordingly, Parmenides adds to the foregoing argument the claim that Largeness is "only" larger than Smallness, and Smallness is only smaller than Largeness (150c).

This declaration, which assumes that Forms are quantifiable magnitudes and could be sized up against each other, is absurd. It also reminds us of the statement Parmenides made at 133e on behalf of the anonymous objector against Socrates's TF. It was said there

that the Form of Mastership is the Master of the Form of Slavery. Here we have no excuse to blame Socrates, for Parmenides has long ago assumed responsibility for the conclusions that follow from his suppositions.⁴³

Since Smallness and Greatness have nothing to do with the *one* or with the *others*, reasons Parmenides, nothing can have the characteristics of smallness or greatness. It presumably follows from this that the *one* cannot be greater or smaller than the *others*, nor can it be greater or smaller than itself. By *modus tollendo ponens*, we are left with the only available option, which was given to us earlier and is repeated here once again: "That which neither exceeds nor is exceeded" by another "must be equal" to it in extent (150c–d).

The whole argument now amounts to the proposition that there is no other measure but equality, which is absurd.⁴⁴ Moreover, the argument is thoroughly fallacious; it is not true that two entities that are not unequal (larger or smaller) *must* be equal in extent. For instance, we cannot say the Forms of Beauty and Justice must be of equal measure because they cannot be of unequal measure. We can only say this if we are considering two *things* with magnitude. For example, if two sticks are not larger or smaller than one another, then they must be of equal size (say, each stick is ten centimeters long). However, since each stick has a measure of ten centimeters, it must admit of unequal measure within itself, for one-fifth (two centimeters) of the stick is smaller than the remaining portion of the stick, which is eight centimeters long. Here tables turn against Parmenides's earlier assertions. If the *one* cannot admit largeness or smallness in any sense, then it also cannot admit equality. If it admits equality, then the *one* must also admit some sense of smallness and largeness. Since he will later on make Parmenides show awareness of the point I just made, we cannot suppose that Plato was not alive to these simple fallacies.⁴⁵

Next, Parmenides wants to prove that the *one* is unequal to itself: "The one, being . . . in itself, will also surround [itself] and be . . . [outside] itself; and, as containing itself, [it] will be greater than itself; and, as contained in itself, [it] will be less; and will thus be greater and less than itself" (150e–151a). This conclusion is sound only if we assume that the container and the contained are two separate things and that the *one* is not, properly speaking, a whole. Since we are speaking of the *one* as a whole with parts, the conclusion is false by definition. There is no legitimate sense in which a whole could be greater than its whole self, for *all* its parts must include the container and the contained.⁴⁶ All we are entitled to say is that a portion of the whole can be larger or smaller than its other portion(s).

Parmenides proceeds to deduce the same conclusion for the *one* and the *others* but adds two premises that make the new conclusion fallacious for different reasons than the one I just noted. The two premises are the following: "There cannot possibly be anything which is not included in the one and the others." In other words, there is nothing besides these two terms. Moreover, anything that *is* "must always be somewhere," as was shown previously. If so, the *one* must be in the *others*, and the *others* must be in the *one*, for there is nothing else for them to be in. From this premise, Parmenides deduces the conclusion that the container in each case must be "greater" than the contained, and the contained must be "less" than the container. If so, "the one, then, will be equal to and greater and less than itself and the others" (151a–b).

Is Parmenides supposing in his last argument that the *one* and the *others* are simultaneously contained in each other? Both yes and no would be unacceptable answers. If the answer is yes, then the statement is absurd. Two separate things cannot simultaneously *contain* each other entirely. If they contain each other partially, the uncontained parts would have to be in something else, which, by the present definition, cannot exist. If the answer is no, then we would have to assume two separate scenarios in which (1) the *one* contains the *others* and (2) the *others* contain the *one*. If (1), then the *one* has to be either in something or somewhere else, other than both itself and the *others* (Parmenides initiated this argument by saying it "must always be somewhere"); if (2), then the *others* have to be either (in) something or somewhere else, other than themselves and the *one*. Since anything that *is* (exists) "must always be somewhere" and since "there can be nothing besides the one and the others," both (1) and (2) are impossible.

The ensuing deductions assume the results obtained from the previous conclusions, though the emphasis now shifts to numerical measures. Greater and smaller now mean a greater or fewer number of parts. If the *one* is "greater and less and equal, it will be of equal and more and less measures or divisions than itself and the others, and if of measures, also of [equal, more, and fewer] parts [than itself and the *others*]." Since it has been shown that the *one* is larger and smaller than itself and is also equal to itself, it follows that the *one* is numerically greater than its contained self, smaller than its containing self, and equal to its whole self, in parts and measures. Likewise, since the *one* is greater and smaller than the *others* and is also equal to them, it will have a greater, fewer, and equal number of measures and parts

with respect to the *others*. Thus numerically, “the one will be . . . equal to and more and less than both itself and all other things” (151c–e).

I fail to see anything more than both triviality and absurdity in this argument. If the *one* is ten centimeters long, it has the same number of centimeters as itself (i.e., its ten parts). Since ten equals ten, when considered as a whole, the *one* is equal to all its parts. If the *others* are ten centimeters long, they also have an equal number of parts (centimeters) to the *one*. It is also trivially true that if the *one* is ten centimeters long and the others are nine, it will have more actual numerical parts than the others. If “the *others*” refers to something other than the parts of the *one*, then it is possible to think that the *one* could have more or fewer parts than the others or that it could have an equal number of the same. Of course, this possibility requires us to ignore Parmenides’s earlier conclusion that each thing has an infinite, and hence equal, number of parts.

But how could the *one* as a whole have more or fewer parts/measures than itself (its part)? The answer Parmenides assumes is that the *one* has more parts when it is greater than itself (its parts) and fewer when it is smaller than itself (its parts). Obviously, and for the reasons given earlier, the *one* as a whole cannot be greater or smaller than itself (its parts). Therefore, it cannot have more or fewer (actual or possible) parts than itself. The assertions—namely, that the *one* has a greater and fewer number of parts than itself—are simply absurd.⁴⁷

The One Is Older and Younger than Itself and the Others

Next, does “the one also partake of time? And is it and does it become older and younger than itself and others, and again, neither younger nor older than itself and others, by virtue of participation in time?” (151e). On the premise that it participates in time, Parmenides will attempt to demonstrate that the *one* indeed is, becomes, and is becoming older and younger than itself and the *others* and also that it neither is, becomes, nor is becoming older and younger than itself and the *others*.

It is important to remember that Parmenides has been, and still is, considering the consequences for the *one* of H2. As if to remind us, he repeats H2 once again, though, this time around, he links the *being* that the *one* has to its being in time. If the *one* is, “being must be predicated of it.” However, “to be (*einai*) is only participation of being in present time, and to have been is the participation of being at a past time, and to be about to be is the participation of being at

a future time." If so, "the one, since it partakes of being, partakes of time" (151e–152a).

This claim repeats the claim made in argument 1, where H1 is deemed impossible on account of failing to participate in time. Once again, as a general rule, the claim that to *be* necessarily means participation in time is false. However, since the *one* of H2 has clearly become an existential entity in argument 2, we may accept the claim as valid in the present case.

Since the *one* (H2) exists in time and time implies the past, the present, and the future, the *one* was, is, and will be. These conditions, in turn, suggest that the *one* is also *becoming* as it moves "forward" in time (152a). The concept of time expressed here is compatible with the one Plato suggests in *Timaeus*. However, *Timaeus* makes it abundantly clear that Forms do not participate in time. Time is only found in the realm of becoming, and since Forms are absolute and unchanging, they do *not* participate in time. Thus Plato in *Timaeus* prohibits us from saying a Form "is, and was, and will be." What we can say is that a Form only *is* in the nontemporal, tenseless sense of *is* (38a). There is no evidence in any of Plato's dialogues to the effect that he thought Forms were temporal entities, being or becoming older or younger in any sense. In *Timaeus* again, Plato points out that the eternal things, such as Forms, "cannot become older or younger by the time" (38a). Does Plato imply here that sensible things can become younger over time? Nothing indicates that he either does or does not. For this reason, regardless of the validity of the present arguments for sensible things, we cannot assume that Plato is here making Parmenides consider his Forms.

On the other hand, by indicating from the outset that the *one* participates in three different tenses, Parmenides has controverted the historical Parmenides's doctrine. Parmenides says in his poem that "there is not, and never shall be, any time other, than that which is present, since fate has chained it so as to be whole and immovable" (VIII.36–38). Notice that the historical Parmenides is not saying, *a la Timaeus*, that the *one* is not in time at all. He is saying instead that it is only in the "present," which also means that time itself is only in one mode. (This view is also consistent with the historical Zeno's attempts, with his various famous paradoxes, to refute the plurality of the mode of time.) At a minimum, then, Parmenides is refuting the historical Parmenides here. The question is, did Plato mean for us to take this refutation seriously? For the reasons I now will give, I do not think he did.

Parmenides gives nine distinct arguments in the present context. First, he attempts to prove that since the *one* exists in time and since time is “always moving forward,” the *one* must always be “becoming older than itself” (152a). We may readily accept that since the *one* “moves forward” in time, it is always becoming older. However, instead of saying this, Parmenides says the *one* is becoming “older than itself.” As I have noted already in the section on the first hypothesis, this conclusion is made possible by relating something in the present to something that no longer exists. In other words, we ought to not say, for instance, that I am now becoming older than what I am now. All we are entitled to say is that I am becoming older than I was before.

The second deduction is even harder to justify. Recalling their agreement in argument 1, Parmenides repeats the necessary parallelism of different correlations he has proposed earlier: (1) older *is* necessarily older than that which *is* younger, and (2) since “the one . . . [is becoming] older than itself,” by parity of the correlation, the *one* is becoming “younger” than itself “at the same time” (152a). Properly speaking, since a thing can only move “forward” in time, (2) is absurd. It should be noted once again that (2) is justified by the logic of (1). However, whereas (1) is necessarily true, (2) expresses not only a different kind of correlation than does (1) but also one that is inapplicable to time-age relations.⁴⁸

We have a different tense in the third argument about Parmenides’s older-younger business. Parmenides reasons now that “when in becoming, [the *one*] gets to the point of time between ‘was’ and ‘will be,’ which is ‘now;’ for surely in going from the past to the future, it cannot skip the present.” This, if taken by itself, is a valid statement. Thus it may be said of the *one* that it, in this sense, *is* always older in the present than it ever was before. However, it must be granted that the *one*, if it is in time, is also always in the process of becoming older. Parmenides appears to be denying this in the present argument. He asserts again that when the *one* “arrives at the present, it stops from becoming older, and no longer becomes, but is [already] older.” That it *is now* older is not questionable. But the repetition of the claim (twice already!) that the *one* “stops from becoming” suggests that the claim is not simply an oversight on Plato’s part. Parmenides suggests the same claim for the third time when he says the *one* “cannot skip the present,” so “it ceases to become, and is then whatever it may happen to be becoming.” For the fourth time, Parmenides states that “the one, when in becoming older it reaches the present, ceases to become, and is then older.” Implying the same claim for the fifth time, he says

the *one* "is older than . . . [the *one*] which . . . was becoming older . . . than itself." In other words, it *is* now fixed into being older than that self that was previously in the process of becoming older than itself. Since what *is* older "is older than that which is younger," the *one* is now also "younger than itself" (152b–e).

It is unlikely that Plato misspoke four, possibly five, times in the preceding passage and unintentionally made Parmenides bring the process of becoming to a halt in the present. It is more likely that he has made Parmenides reproduce the historical Parmenides's view of being in time, which is always the present, and in which there is no becoming. If so, he has also reproduced Zeno's arrow paradox. According to Aristotle, Zeno "says that . . . if that which is in locomotion is always in a now, the flying arrow is therefore motionless."⁴⁹ Similarly, Parmenides says in the foregoing discussion that, if the *one* is always "in a now," it will cease "from becoming" and thus will remain at the (older) age it has become.⁵⁰

In his fourth argument, Parmenides concludes that the *one* is also the same age as itself: "If it becomes or is for an equal time with itself, it is of the same age with itself." Moreover, "that which is of the same age, is neither older nor younger." If so, the *one* "neither is nor becomes older or younger than itself." Agreeably, "there is obviously a sense in which a thing must always be of the same age as itself."⁵¹

With the fifth argument, Parmenides begins to consider the age relationship of the *one* to the *others*. This argument entails a typical sophistry in which different premises are conflated to obtain an end result. According to Parmenides, we can surely say that the *others*, which are different from the *one*, "are more than the one" and are thus "a multitude." Since they are a multitude, the *others* must be "a number larger than one." (For instance, following Cornford's example, *we* may say that one brick is less than ten bricks in number.) However, Parmenides conflates the term "less" with "earlier" in his next move: "The lesser . . . is the first to come or to have come into existence." Being the first to "have come into existence" clearly means the *one* has temporally come to exist earlier than the *others* (153a).⁵²

By ignoring Parmenides's shift from the smallest, or least, to the earliest, Cornford argues that the conclusion is valid. For instance, in the "history of [building] a wall," the first brick is older (earlier) than all the rest.⁵³ However, Parmenides's follow-up statement denies Cornford's reduction of the argument to a special case. Since "all other things" are plural in number, "of all things that have number," the *one* "is the first to come into being." If so, the *others* are always "younger" than the *one*, and the *one* is "older" than them (153a–b).

As a general rule, the conclusion is clearly false.⁵⁴ For instance, among the five fingers of a hand, no single finger is older than the other four fingers, individually or collectively. Moreover, we should not ignore the tricky shift from less-more to younger-older, which is an obvious exercise in sophistry.

The sixth argument assumes that the *others* are the parts of the *one*, which is a whole. As was indicated previously (“one was shown to have parts,” referring to 142d and 145a), if the *one* is a whole, it must have “a beginning, middle and end,” which are its parts. It is in the “nature” of the *one* to become a whole and thus to have these three parts. Another trick is implanted into this comment. Instead of saying that it is in the nature of a whole to *be* a whole with parts, we are told that it is in its nature to *become* a whole with parts. Given that Parmenides is still assuming the participation of the *one* in time, this trick allows him to temporally sequence the becoming of these parts. Hence he concludes that, in becoming a whole over time, “a beginning, both of the one itself and of all other [parts], comes into being first of all; and after the beginning, the [middle parts] follow, until you reach the end.” In this sequence of becoming, the *one* becomes a complete whole “simultaneously with the end” or when the “end is reached.” If so, the *one* as a whole “is younger than the others [i.e., its beginning and middle parts] and the others older than the one” (153c–d).

This argument suggests that the *one* is “always” generated and becomes a whole over time. Thus the *one* as a whole is younger than its beginning and middle parts. We may validate the argument, if we want to charitably validate it, only by treating what is said to be “always” true as a special case.⁵⁵ However, the reasoning of the argument, regardless of the sense in which we put it, is incompatible with the logical construction of the *one* of H2 (clearly recalled in the sixth argument!), which supposes that the *one* already *is* a whole with parts.

The seventh argument supposes that at every stage of its formation, the *one* remains a whole and is thus essentially the same one, whole *thing*. Parmenides argues this point in the following problematic manner: “The beginning or any other part of the one or of anything, if it be *a* part,” must also be one (part). If so, the *one* will “come into being together [simultaneously] with each part . . . and will not be wanting to any part, which is added to any other part until it has reached the last and become one whole [i.e., the *one*].” If so, “the one is of the same age with all the others, so that if the one itself does not contradict its own nature, it will be neither [temporally] prior nor posterior to the others, but simultaneous [with them].” In conclusion,

"according to this argument the one will be neither older nor younger than the others, and the others than the one." However, "according to the previous argument the one will be older and younger than the others and the others than the one" (153d–154a).

As Parmenides's last comment acknowledges, the seventh argument contradicts the sixth. Moreover, the seventh argument is faulty. Parmenides likely assumes that the *one* is constantly present to the thing being generated. If so, we have to conclude that the *one* is as old as the first part and thus is older than the parts added later. This is to say, the generated thing is always older than what it *used to be*. Thus it is not true that *all* the *others* cannot be younger than the *one*. For instance, we cannot say that the fruit of a tree is as old as the tree itself. Other possible readings of the seventh argument are equally problematic.⁵⁶ In short, while it is true that each generated thing is as old as itself in each instance in time, it is not true that all its temporally added parts are of the same age or that every part is as old as the thing being generated.

In the next two arguments, the term *others* refers to other things besides the *one*. Parmenides's eighth argument goes as follows: "even if one thing were older or younger than another, it could not become older or younger [to] a greater degree than it was at first; for equals added to unequals, whether to periods of time or to anything else, leave the difference between them the same as at first." If so, anything that exists in time "cannot become [increasingly] older or younger than" another thing that also exists at the same time. "Since the difference of age is always the same, the one is and has become older and the other younger, but they are no longer *becoming* [older or younger than each other; emphasis added]" (154b–c).

The point of the eighth argument is very simple. If person A is born ten years earlier than person B, A is always ten years older than B and B ten years younger than A. They are both becoming older than they *were* before, though A always remains older than B by ten years. If so, A and B are not *becoming* older or younger than each other. By the same sound reasoning, I surmise, it can be shown that A (or B) is also not becoming older or younger than its present self. Yet in the second argument, Parmenides argued the contrary. I take it that the eighth argument contradicts the second argument.

Parmenides opens the ninth argument by saying, "in another way," it can be "proven" that both the *one* and the *others* are becoming older and younger than each other. The "another way" to which he is referring means the following: "If the one is older than the others, [it] has come into being [for] a longer time than the others." Further, "if

we add equal time to [both] a greater [time] and a less time, . . . the greater [time will] differ from the less time by . . . a smaller portion than before" (154c–d).

Notice that we are adding an equal *quantity* of time to two unequal *quantities* of time. Thus, as is the case in our previous example, if A (the *one*) is twenty years old at a given point in time and B is ten, the difference in age between them is, and will always remain, ten. Ten years later, A will become thirty years old, and B will become twenty. However, the ratio between their ages has changed. In the first scenario, the ratio is two-to-one, whereas in the second, it is three-to-two. If we constantly add ten more years to both A and B, we get four-to-three, five-to-four, and so on. Hence the ratio is constantly approaching equality without ever reaching it. Thus far, this is a perfectly acceptable argument.

However, on the basis of this sound reasoning, Parmenides concludes that "the difference between the age of the one and the age of the others will not be afterwards so great as [it was] at first, but, if an equal time be added to both of them, they will differ less and less in age" (154d). What started as an interesting, sound argument has now become somewhat strange by Parmenides's exclusion of the word "portion," or ratio, from the conclusion. We are now told that the incremental addition of the same quantity of time to each will make the difference in age "less and less" over time. This, of course, is not true; the age difference is still the same. Perhaps Parmenides mis-spoke and really meant to say that the difference of age will become less proportionally. Still, the following claim is unwarranted: the *one*, which was previously older than the *others*, with the incremental lessening of age difference, is now becoming younger than the *others*, and the *others* are "always becoming . . . older" in relation to the *one*. Properly speaking, this conclusion requires the *one* and the *others* to move in opposite directions in time. In fact, this is precisely what Parmenides says next: "As they are always going in opposite directions, they become" the contrary of what they used to be in relation to each other—"the younger [becoming] older than the older, and the older younger than the younger"—though they never end up becoming so (154e–155b).

The final touch of this argument is paradoxical. According to Parmenides's earlier definition, the *one* is necessarily in time—"time is always moving forward"—therefore, the *one* (and everything else that is in time) moves forward in time (152a). If so, the *one* and the *others* can never temporally "move in opposite directions." This argument is valid only if we ignore the several important claims Parmenides has

managed to insert into it. Other scholars have overlooked them by assuming that the argument only relies on the premise of proportionality.⁵⁷ Perhaps there is something to this assumption, since the last argument ends by once again treating the changing difference of age in terms of "different portion" (155c). Or perhaps the argument is meant to create yet another perplexity.

Conclusions of Argument 2

"For all these reasons, then, the one is and becomes older and younger than itself and the others, and neither is nor becomes older or younger than itself or the others." Whether it is on reasonable grounds or otherwise (as I have been claiming all along), this conclusion calls to mind the preparation for the fatal conclusion in argument 1. It was stated there that since the *one* cannot have these age-related attributes, it could not possibly be in time. If it were not in time, then it could not possibly have all the other time-related affections. In argument 2, the reverse is true, for the *one* has been shown, at the cost of becoming existential, that it is in time. Consequently, "since the one partakes of time, and partakes of becoming older and younger, it . . . [must] also partake of the past, the present, and the future." If so, "there is and was and will be something which is in relation to it and belongs to it." Also, "the one was and is and will be, and was becoming and is becoming and will become . . . and . . . is and was and will be something which is in relation to it and belongs to it" (155c–d).

The evidence provided in argument 2 suffices to reverse the verdict of argument 1: "Since we have at this moment opinion and knowledge and perception of the one, there is opinion and knowledge and perception of it." Also, "there is name and expression for it, and it is named and expressed, and everything of this kind which appertains to other things appertains to the one" (155d–e).

As Cornford rightly points out, "it is easy to detect here a reference to Parmenides' assertions that only his unique and indivisible One Being could be 'thought of or truly named.'" More specifically, Parmenides here repeats, with an ironic twist, the historical Parmenides's claim that what is spoken of and thought of both *is* and *is true*. Since Parmenides has been able to speak of the *one* as many things (in all manners, both positive and negative) and in terms of its becoming, he has shown, against the historical Parmenides, that we can indeed speak of and name all the things his doctrine prohibits us from speaking of and naming.⁵⁸

As Parmenides has noted at the very beginning of argument 2, they have to accept all the consequences for their supposition, whatever they may be. It is clear that Parmenides has not rejected any of the conclusions of argument 2. The crucial question here is this: what do all these conclusions amount to, or what is Parmenides accepting? I think I have sufficiently demonstrated that, thanks to the magical method, argument 2 is saturated with obvious contradictions, absurdities, fallacies, and perplexing ambiguities. For this reason, argument 2 also satirizes the method of argumentation attributed to both Parmenides and Zeno. Of course, others have different assessments of argument 2.⁵⁹

Moreover, it is unreasonable to conclude that argument 2 offers a new Platonic TF. I ask rhetorically, where does Plato ever say that Forms have a shape and size; grow older and younger; are generated, brick by brick as it were; touch and do not touch themselves and the *others*; are in motion and at rest; are and are not in a place; or entail their opposites (one and many, odd and even, etc.)? Again, others disagree with my assessment.⁶⁰

THE APPENDIX

Parmenides now takes up the argument “for the third time” (155e). The Neoplatonists thought this “third” argument was yet another main argument. It is generally assumed nowadays that the appendix combines the first two arguments⁶¹ or that it is only a supplement to argument 2.⁶² In my view, while it initially combines the hypotheses and the results of arguments 1 and 2, the appendix adds *new* dimensions to the ontological status of the *one*, which cannot be found in either argument 1 or 2. It may be read as an absurd attempt to solve the contradiction between the results of these two arguments.

Parmenides begins the appendix with a rather convoluted claim: “If the one is as we have described it—being both one and many [as described in argument 2] and neither one nor many [as described in argument 1], and partaking of time [argument 2]—must it not, because it is one, sometimes partake of being [argument 2], and in turn because it is not, sometimes not partake of being [argument 1]” (155e; the text does not explicitly make the bracketed connections to these arguments).⁶³

Perhaps, the phrase “partaking of time” was meant to come after the phrase “being both one and many.” Otherwise, it makes no sense to suppose that the *one*, which is neither one nor many, is in time. In fact, Parmenides does not suppose this anywhere in the previous

arguments, nor will he claim in the following discussion that the neither-nor condition is possible when the *one* is in time. To this condition, he will add the following: neither at rest nor in motion, neither like nor unlike, and neither small, large, nor equal. These are all but the conclusions of argument 1. How could we, then, say these are possible conditions (if we may call them "conditions") of the *one* of argument 1, if indeed it is neither in time nor has any sense of *being*? Parmenides's rather implausible answer will be that the *one* is in such neither-nor conditions when it is in the instant, which is a break in time. However, for the reasons given in the following discussion, the instant theory depends on modifying argument 2. For instance, instead of saying the *one* is both one and many, Parmenides will say it is either one or many.

One more clarification needs to be made before we proceed. The last sentence of the opening statement basically says that the *one*, insofar as "it is one," must "partake of being," and the *one*, insofar as "it is not" one, must "sometimes not partake of being." Is having *being* and not having *being* related to being one and being many? That these two pairs of contraries are presented together in the same statement suggests a necessary relationship between them. Besides, in the Eleatic parlance, it is possible to say that, since being many is impossible, not-*being* and being many have the same meaning. However, the ensuing discussions do not endorse this reading, especially since these contrary pairs are discussed rather independently of one another.

Accordingly, Parmenides stipulates next that the *one* cannot "partake of being when not partaking of being," and it cannot lack "being when partaking of being." If so, "the one partakes and does not partake of being at different times, for that is the only way in which it can partake and not partake of [*being*]." In short, the *one* either does or does not have *being* but cannot both *be* and not-*be* at the same time. It follows that since the *one* cannot both "have and not have the same thing unless it receives and also gives it up at some time," there must be (1) "a time at which it assumes being," and (2) another time when it "relinquishes being." If in (1), then we say it is "becoming," and if in (2), then we say it is being destroyed or is ceasing to *be* (155e–156b). According to Allen, Parmenides's statement requires us to say, for instance, "Socrates exists [or has *being*] at one time but not at another."⁶⁴ Allen rightly thinks this assertion is absurd.

Parmenides also says that "when [the *one*, or anything] becomes one, it ceases to be many, and when [it becomes] many, it ceases to be one" (156b). Thus Parmenides is now saying that the *one* is *either* one *or* many but cannot be both at the same time. By saying this,

he contradicts what Socrates rightly took to be obviously true at the beginning of part I: "I am one thing also many" (129c–d). Moreover, against H2, he is implying now that the *one* can be many without having any oneness and can be one without having any sense of plurality.

The following sentences are abruptly introduced at this point in the appendix: "As it becomes one and many," it must "inevitably experience" combination and "separation . . . And whenever it becomes like and unlike, it must be assimilated and dissimilated . . . And when it becomes greater or less or equal, it must grow or diminish or be equalized" (156b). Turnbull thinks these passages illustrate that Parmenides is not treating one and many in mutually exclusive, either-or terms in the appendix.⁶⁵ Even though the passages just quoted, if taken in isolation, suggest that Turnbull might be correct, both what Parmenides has told us earlier and what he will tell us next suggest otherwise.

What Parmenides wants to describe next is the instant (the "moment") in which the *one* *neither* is *nor* is not one or many, and so on. This neither-nor condition clearly depends on two premises. First, it requires the either-or assumption, which dictates that the *one* is either *x* (e.g., one) or not *x* (many). Second, being neither is a special case that happens in the instant. Thus the *one* is never both *x* and not *x* at the same time; it is either *x* or not *x* when it is in time, but it is neither *x* nor not *x* when it is in the instant.

Parmenides initially uses the states of rest and motion to illustrate the ontological status of the *one* in the instant, perhaps because the transition of all the contraries mentioned thus far entails some sort of motion. The *one*, when it is in time, claims Parmenides, is either at rest or in motion, but not both simultaneously. At the very moment when the moving *one* comes to rest or the resting *one* begins to move, "it can surely be in no time at all." This is because its being in time requires the *one* to *be* in one condition or in the contrary condition, whereas it is in neither condition at that very moment (being in both conditions is unfortunately ruled out). However, "there cannot be a time in which a thing can be at once neither in motion nor at rest" (156c). The following perplexity arises from the foregoing: at the very moment of its transition, the *one* is neither at rest nor in motion, but that moment of transition, if it is a time, requires the *one* to *be* in one condition or another. Thus Parmenides proposes the most peculiar solution to resolve the dilemma: the "moment," or instant, of transition is not in time.

The "moment seems to imply a something out of which change takes place into either of two states; for the change is not from the

state of rest as such, nor from the state of motion as such; but there is this curious nature which we call the 'moment' lying between rest and motion, not being in any time; and into this and out of this what is in motion changes into rest, and what is at rest into motion" (156b–e).

In short, the *one* is neither in motion, at rest, nor in time in the instant/moment but is somehow capable of making a transition from one state to another in this "curious" whatever. Clearly, too, this implies that the instant is a gap of sorts in time, since it is assumed that there is, otherwise, continuous time and motion. In short, since the *one* is both in motion and at rest but, as we have said, since it cannot be in both conditions simultaneously, it can only be in both conditions by changing from one condition to the other. Moreover, it can undergo this change if "it changes in a moment, and, when it is changing, it will be in no time, and will not then be either in motion or at rest" (156e).

Parmenides generalizes the application of the instant/moment to include "the other changes." When the *one* "passes from being into cessation of being, or from not-being into . . . [acquiring *being*]"—then it passes between certain states of motion and rest, and neither is nor is not, nor becomes nor is destroyed." This conclusion is utterly nonsensical, even if we accept the instant theory. At the beginning of the appendix, Parmenides pointed out that the *one*, "in as far as it is one," must "at times partake of being, and in as far as it is not one, at times [must] not partake of being" (156e–157a). What Parmenides is telling us now is that the *one* has *being* at one point in time; neither has nor does not have *being* in the instant; and, after its metamorphosis in the instant, ceases to *be* in the subsequent time. However, he has repeatedly told us in both arguments 1 and 2, and in the appendix too, that that which is in time must possess *being*. It follows from this that, after the instant, there is no *one* to speak of at all, unless we now suppose that the *one* is capable of participating in time while not having *being*. Besides, how could the *one* revert "from not-being" into having *being*? In order to be able to say that it could, Parmenides has to accept that something could come out of nothing and controvert the historical Parmenides's dictum that this is impossible (PP, VI.9, VIII.5–10).

Parmenides says, "On the same principle, in the passage from one to many and from many to one, the one is neither one nor many, neither separated nor aggregated; and in the passage from like to unlike, and from unlike to like, it is neither like nor unlike, neither in a state of assimilation nor of dissimilation; and in the passage from small to great and equal and back again, it will be neither small nor great,

nor equal, nor in a state of increase, or diminution, or equalization” (157a–b).

Basically, the *one* is nothing when it is in the instant,⁶⁶ which is a break in time—in the manner of Zeno.⁶⁷ Presumably, this solves the contradiction between the conclusions of argument 1 and 2: the *one is nothing* (argument 1), and it is, or has, all the attributes enumerated in the foregoing discussion (argument 2). We could maintain both claims only if we place argument 1 exclusively into the instant and convert the conclusions of argument 2 to exclusively either-or conditions. However, the instant theory is unbelievable because, among other things, it rests on an absurd theory of time. Besides, avoiding the contradiction between the two arguments has forced Parmenides to modify argument 2 by proposing the absurd view that the *one* is only in either-or conditions.

The appendix ends with a rather casual statement: “All these, then, are the affections of the one, if the one has being” (157b). In isolation, this conclusion lends some credibility to the view that the appendix only appends argument 2, for it is in this argument that “the one has being” is supposed. However, it is difficult to ignore that not-*being*, which was given to us as already “described,” refers to argument 1. Either way, the casual conclusion cannot exclude the appendix, which is irreducible to either argument 1 or argument 2.⁶⁸ The appendix includes two novel conclusions. First, the *one* is either x or not x , but it is not both at the same time. Second, the *one* in the *instant* is neither x nor not x . These conclusions, which were meant to reconcile the previous two arguments, are both absurd and non-Platonic. However, as the concluding statement indicates, Parmenides accepts the conclusions of the appendix.⁶⁹

ARGUMENT 3: IF THE ABSOLUTE ONE PARTICIPATES, THE OTHERS ARE

Argument 3, like the rest of the remaining arguments, is very brief. It begins by resetting the main supposition: if the *one is*, “what will happen to the others?” (157b). As we will see in this section, the *one* of H3 is consistent with the Platonic Form of Unity. In fact, argument 3 is consistent with the middle-period TF, though it does not in any significant way add to it.

Argument 3 is generally sound. Why would Plato allow Parmenides to offer a brief but sound demonstration of the TF here? Very likely, Plato wants to show how Parmenides’s method is also capable of proving the very theory that Parmenides found implausible in part I.⁷⁰

Clearly, H3 is not the same as H2.⁷¹ The *one* of H3 is defined as an "absolute one," which does not have either any parts, contrary or otherwise, or any sensible qualities (see the following).⁷² What is exclusively shown in the following discussion is that the *others* are distinct things by virtue of *partaking of* Unity. H3 sounds similar to H1, but it is rather difficult to compare argument 3 to argument 1, mainly because, unlike the latter argument, the former is concerned with the consequence of the supposition for the *others*.

"Inasmuch as there are things other than the one," says Parmenides, "the others are not the one; for if they were they could not be other than the one." It becomes clear rather quickly that the *one* is Unity itself: "Nor are the others altogether without the one, but in a certain way they [partake of]⁷³ the one." In other words, "The others are other than the one inasmuch as they have parts; for if they had no parts they would be simply [or absolutely] one," a term that is reserved here for the *one* alone (157b–c).

By participating in the *others*, the *one* causes the *others* to be wholes with parts or distinctive things. This conclusion can be deduced somewhat indirectly from the following sentence: "And parts, as we affirm, have relation to a whole," and "a whole must necessarily be one made up of many [parts]; and the parts will be parts of the [whole], for each of the parts is not a part of many, but of a whole" (157c). This argument prevents us from reducing the *others* to merely many. Each part must be *a* part of *a* whole and not a part of an amorphous many. Said differently, both a whole and its many parts have unity, thanks to the participation of the *one* in them.

Parmenides adds a confusing statement to the foregoing:

If anything were a part of many, being itself one of them, it will surely be a part of itself, which is impossible, and it will be a part of each one of the other parts, if of all; for if not a part of . . . one [part], it will be a part of all the other [parts] but this one [part], and thus will not be a part of each one; and if not a part of each, one it will not be a part of any one of the many; and not being a part of any one, it cannot be a part or anything else of all those things of none of which it is anything. (157c–d)

It is hard to make sense of the last argument, unless we read what follows next: "Therefore a part is part not of many or of all [dispersed individual parts], but of a single entity or 'one' which we call a whole, a complete 'one' composed of all [parts]. Hence if the others have parts, they must also possess wholeness and unity."⁷⁴ The "one" in

this particular definition is not *the one*. Rather, it stands for the unity of the many parts, which makes them *a* whole, as in Socrates being one (whole) person with many parts. In conclusion, “the things other than the one must be one complete whole having parts” (157c–e). Looking back at the foregoing confusing paragraph, we can now ascertain what it intends to say. A part cannot be a part of something that is merely many and is not, properly speaking, a whole. To be a whole requires the participation of the *one* in the many, and only with this participation can each part be *a* part of *a* whole.

The description of the *others* here, of course, parallels the description of the *one* in the early deductions of argument 2. The difference is that in argument 3, Parmenides differentiates the *one* itself from a one that is a whole with parts. Argument 2 simply treats the *one* as the equivalent of what Parmenides here calls the *others* as a whole. This difference is well captured in *Sophist*, where Plato makes the following argument against the historical Parmenides: “If a thing is divided into parts, there is nothing against its having the property of unity as applied to the aggregate of all the parts and being that way . . . a sum or whole.” (This statement coincides with the *one* of argument 2 and with the *others* of argument 3.) But “surely unity in the true sense and rightly defined must be altogether without parts.” Parmenides’s *one* “will not answer to that definition” of Unity because it necessarily has parts within itself, even though Parmenides denies this (245a–b). Plato’s *one*, and the *one* of argument 3, answers precisely to “that definition” of “the true” Unity.

Repeating what Plato tells us in the previous passage from *Sophist*, our Parmenides adds that what is true of a whole is also true “of each part, for the part must . . . [also partake of] the one; for . . . each of the parts is a part,” which means “that it is one [part] separate from the rest [of the parts] and self-related; otherwise it is not ‘each.’” Parmenides adds a crucial clarification here: “When we speak of the part [partaking of] the one, [the part we speak of] must clearly be other than [the *one*].” Otherwise, instead of being something that partakes, it would be the *one* itself. This claim forcefully distinguishes the unity found in the parts, and parts themselves, from the Unity (the *one*) itself. The Unity does not *have* or partake of unity; it is the Unity itself. The *others* only *have* unity (157e–158a).

In short, if they are to be “one whole, of which the parts will be parts” and if “each part . . . [is to be] one part of the whole, . . . both the whole and the parts must [partake of] the one.” Also, what partakes of the *one* cannot be the *one* itself but “other than it.” Moreover, “the things which are other than the one will be [both] many [and

one]; for if the things which are other than the one were neither one nor more than one, they would be nothing" (158a–b). These conclusions indicate that the *others* are not Forms.⁷⁵

Also, the *others*, which partake of the *one* but are necessarily other than the *one*, must "be infinite in number" or "multitude." How so? Parmenides's answer is at first very confusing but becomes very clear as we read on. The clearer part says, "If we were to abstract from them in . . . [thought] the very smallest fraction, . . . that least fraction, if it does not partake of the one, [must] be [merely] a multitude . . . If we continue to look at . . . their nature" in this manner, without taking into account their partaking of the *one*, the *others* would "be unlimited" (158b–c). In short, if the *others* do not partake of the *one* at all, they would have no limit whatsoever, and, therefore, they would, properly speaking, be neither wholes nor parts. This basically anticipates argument 4, in which the *one* does not participate in the others.

This last argument is meant to uncover the cause of limit. What brought the unlimited nature of a part, or a whole, into our purview was the abstraction, in thought, of the character of unity out of them. A more concrete consideration of the concept of the *others* would involve combining their unity with their multitudinous nature. In such a combination, we observe the limit of such things and come to see them as distinct wholes and parts. Thus, by partaking of the *one*, the *others* acquire "a new element [character] in them which gives to them limitation in relation to one another; whereas in their own nature they have no limit." It follows that the *others*, "both as a whole and parts, are infinite, and also partake of limit" in relation to each other and in relation to the whole (158d).

It further follows from the last conclusion that the *others* "are both like and unlike one another and themselves." They are alike (at least) in two respects: "Inasmuch as they are unlimited" and "inasmuch as they all partake of limit." In other words, both as wholes and as parts, things other than the *one* share in common the same two attributes of limit and limitlessness. In each one of these respects, they are alike. At the same time, since these are contrary attributes, possessed at the same time by each, the *others* also have unlikeness. In conclusion, "the others are both like and unlike [within] themselves and [with] one another" (158d–159a).

Clearly, the foregoing deductions leave many questions unanswered. Equally clearly, Plato, for whatever reason, is not interested in having Parmenides give a detailed account here. This is evident in the following conclusions: the *others* "are the same and also different from one another, and in motion and at rest, and experience every sort

of opposite [attribute], as may be proved without difficulty of them, since they have been shown to have experienced the [attributes]" of limit and limitlessness (159a–b). For the sake of brevity, I will assume that Parmenides will not have much difficulty in demonstrating these claims.

Since all these "contrary" attributes are attributed to the *others* only, argument 3 has not controverted Socrates's claim, made at the threshold of the dialogue. Nothing in the previous passage indicates that the Form of Unity has these contrary attributes. In fact, the claim Parmenides just made sounds almost like Socrates's claim to the effect that it is not difficult to show how other things (sticks and stones) have these contrary characters (129c–d).

In conclusion, argument 3 basically repeats the middle-period TF without saying anything new about the structure of Forms.⁷⁶ Argument 3 also does not shed any new light on resolving the dilemma of participation that Parmenides conjured up in part I. In fact, it makes nonsense of the dilemma. This is to say, it is absurd to ask, as did Parmenides in part I, whether an absolute entity, which is not a whole with parts, participates in the *others* as a whole or as parts.⁷⁷ Lastly, as I mentioned earlier, the joke of argument 3 is that Parmenides uses his own method to prove the very theory he (unjustly) criticized in part I.

ARGUMENT 4: IF THE ABSOLUTE ONE DOES NOT PARTICIPATE, THE OTHERS ARE NOT

"Suppose, now, that we leave the further discussion of these matters as evident" and see if the "opposite" of the results obtained in argument 3 is also true of the *others*, if the *one is* (159b).⁷⁸ Well, the opposite results will be obtained in argument 4. Clearly, Parmenides has accepted the results of argument 3 and wants to illustrate how his method can deduce the opposite results from the same hypothesis. However, in order to do this, he will have to redefine the *one's* relationship to the *others*. In particular, he will make it incapable of participating in the *others* with two faulty moves.

Parmenides begins argument 4 with a flawed argument. First, he deduces the following conclusion from H4: "The one [must] be distinct from the others, and the others from the one." Parmenides's reasoning here is that since "the expression, 'one and the others,' includes all things, . . . there is nothing else besides" the *one* and the *others*. If a third category is lacking, neither the *one* nor the *others* can be in anything. Hence "we cannot suppose that there is anything

different from them in which both the one and the others might exist [together]." Therefore, the *one* and the *others* "are separated from each other" (159b–c). Obviously, this conclusion is fallacious.⁷⁹ The premise that "there is nothing else" besides the *one* and the *others* does not necessarily make the *one* incapable of participating in the others, or vice versa.⁸⁰ For this reason, it is not true that the *one* and the *others* must be completely separated from one another.

Moreover, Parmenides continues, "we surely cannot say that what is truly one has parts." The justification for this conclusion is given only by the assumed definition of the *one* as "truly one." This definition of the *one*, combined with its radical separation from the *others*, claims Parmenides, necessitates the following conclusion: "The one will not be in the others as a whole, nor as part, if it be separated from the others, and has no parts." If so, "there is no way in which the others can partake of the one, if they do not partake [of it] either [as a] whole or in part" (159c–d).

This double conclusion is redundant. Regardless of its nature, if it is radically separated from the *others*, the *one* cannot participate in the *others* anyway. But Parmenides wants to insist that the *one* also cannot participate in the *others* on account of its not being a whole with parts. This implication undermines the main premise of argument 3—namely, that the "truly" *one* is actually capable of participating in the *others*. All that Parmenides has shown here convincingly is that since it is not a whole with parts, the "truly" *one* cannot participate in the others as a whole or as parts. This is hardly a proof that the *one* cannot participate in the *others* at all.

Given the presumed double proofs of the radical separation of the *one* from the *others*, Parmenides reasons now that "there is no way in which the others are one, or have in themselves any unity." If so, the *others* also cannot be "many, for if they were many, each part of them would be a part of the whole; but now the others, not partaking [of] any way of the one, are neither one nor many, nor whole, nor parts" (159c–d).

Without the participation of the *one* in them, the *others* also can neither be nor have numbers, such as "two or three," for these numbers imply two or three ones. From the premise of the absence of oneness in them, Parmenides concludes that "the others are neither like nor unlike the one." This conclusion is a tall order, for Parmenides has supposed, at the threshold of argument 4, that the *others are* but are other than the *one*. From the absence of two in them, he concludes that the *others* also cannot have "likeness and unlikeness in them." If they did, they would have "two natures [or characters] in

them, opposite to one another,” but it is “impossible” for “that which partakes of nothing to partake of two things” (159d–160a). This conclusion contradicts his earlier statement to the effect that the *others are*, which implies both being and plurality.

It is readily implied that the reasoning used in the foregoing argument justifies the following conclusions: “Therefore [the *others*] are neither the same, nor [different], nor in motion, nor at rest, nor in a state of becoming, nor of being destroyed, nor greater, nor less, nor equal, nor have they experienced anything else of the sort; for, if they are capable of experiencing any such affection, they will participate in one and two and three, and odd and even, and in these, as has been proved, they do not participate, seeing that they are altogether and in every way devoid of the one” (160a–b). Oddly enough, Parmenides does not say that without any characteristics, the *others* cannot *be* at all.

Since the TF does not deny participation, it is implausible to argue that argument 4 is a valid criticism of it.⁸¹ A Platonist could easily read argument 4 as a negative validation of the participation theory proposed in argument 3.⁸² Relatedly, both of these arguments hold that the *one* is not a whole with parts. However, while argument 3 allows the same *one* to participate in the *others*, argument 4 disallows participation—I believe on both fallacious and unreasonable grounds.⁸³ However, there is no indication in the text to the effect that Parmenides is uncomfortable with the results of argument 4. His method is capable of justifying everything, however contradictory it may be.

THE CONCLUSION OF ARGUMENTS 1–4: PARMENIDES’S AND OURS

At the end of argument 4, Parmenides abruptly offers the following general conclusion: if the *one* is, it “is all things, and also nothing, both in relation to itself and to other things” (160b).

Some scholars claim that, with this statement, Plato meant to conclude only arguments 1 and 2 and that a conjectural, even unwarranted, emendation, which is not found in the Greek, is necessary to make it the conclusion of all four arguments.⁸⁴ Others argue that Plato meant to give a general conclusion for all four arguments. Since Parmenides has not rejected any of the conclusions, I see no harm in accepting the latter view.

However, some of those who hold the latter view claim that the conclusion is merely a summary and does not express fundamental

contradictions between the conclusions of the four arguments.⁸⁵ Others argue that the conclusion highlights the absurdity of Parmenides's whole enterprise as it stands thus far.⁸⁶ I agree with the latter view. It is difficult not to accept that argument 2 contradicts argument 1 and that argument 4 contradicts argument 3. As was noted previously, Parmenides himself has suggested these contradictions (142b, 159a, appendix). Moreover, Parmenides has kept his promise (142b) and accepted all the consequences his trusted "argument" has produced. Thus the conclusion reflects the contradictory nature of the "truth" he has been able to deliver thus far, thanks to his method.

It is rather evident that arguments 1 and 2 exercise different possible versions of the historical Parmenides's doctrine, at a great cost to this doctrine. Argument 3 is compatible with Plato's middle-period TF and may be attributed to him. Argument 4, arguably, belongs to a school of thought that believed in the radical separation of the *one* (or Forms) from our world. I will offer more conclusive evidence to support these conclusions in Chapter 4. Last, it is difficult to read the foregoing exercises as a serious investigation into the nature of truth or reality, for they entail too many fallacies, absurdities, and ambiguities.

ARGUMENT 5: WHATEVER IS SAID OF THE NEGATIVE *ONE* MUST BE TRUE AND KNOWN

Next, Parmenides is to consider the negative supposition "if the one is not" and deduce its consequences for the *one* in arguments 5 and 6 and for the *others* in arguments 7 and 8. However, argument 5 also considers some consequences of the negative *one* for the *others* and, like argument 2, does not entirely follow the expected program of part II.

According to Cornford, in argument 5, Plato criticizes the "dogma" proposed by the historical Parmenides, which says "nothing can be said about 'what is not.'" Plato refutes this dogma by using "against Parmenides his own principle," which is that "whatever can be thought must be."⁸⁷ Since we can think of it, the *one* that *is not* must in some sense be: if it *is*, then something meaningful can be said of it.

I agree with Cornford but add that argument 5 has a strong sophistical dimension. As Cornford also notes elsewhere, Protagoras held the view that "to think what is false is to think what is not; but that is to think nothing; and that, again, is not to think at all: therefore we can only think the thing that is, and all judgments must be true."⁸⁸

Plato clearly thinks that this sophist position finds refuge in the Parmenidean “dogma” and “principle” (Chapter 4). His aim in argument 5 is to satirize both the historical Parmenides and Protagoras, not only by speaking of *what is not*, but also by speaking of it fallaciously. This strategy, which is openly practiced in *Theaetetus*, reduces the Eleatic-sophist camp to the following double *aporia*: If they accept as valid the ensuing arguments about the *one* that *is not*, then they have to also accept that the “dogma” is false. If, on the other hand, they accuse Plato of making Parmenides controvert the dogma with fallacious arguments, then they have to admit that (at least) the Protagorian statement of the “principle,” which denies falsehood, is itself false.

At the beginning of argument 5, Parmenides reminds us that he is now to consider the “consequences” of the supposition “if the one is not.” This supposition, he says, is the “entire” opposite of the supposition “if not one is not” (160b–c). This ambiguous comment has led to a variety of interpretations of what Parmenides means here.⁸⁹ It seems to me that the positive supposition “if the one is” is the only direct contrary of the supposition “if the one is not.” For this reason, the supposition “if not one is not” may well be a double negative, which, in effect, implies “if the one is.” This, of course, does very little to clarify what H5 means. I argue that its unclear meaning is important to Plato’s intentions in argument 5.

First, we are told that when we utter H5, what we are speaking of must be a different thing. For instance, when someone says, “If greatness [largeness] is not, if smallness is not,” he or she always means that “‘what is not’ is other than other things.” If so, “when he says ‘If one is not,’ he clearly means that what ‘is not’ is other than all others; [and] we know what he means.” The underlying assumption here is that, regardless of whether it *is* or it *is not*, every time a person says something, he or she implies something that *is* and that it is a different thing than all other things; it *is not* the other things. Thus, according to Parmenides, “When he says ‘one,’ he says something which is known; and secondly something which is other than [different from] all other things; it makes no difference whether he predicates of one being [or *one is*] or not-being [or *one is not*], for that which is said ‘not to be’ is known to be something all the same, and is distinguished from other things” (160c–d).

Cornford reads Parmenides’s comment here as saying that what “does not exist [or *is not*]” is not “entirely unknowable.” Thus “true statements can be made about a thing that does not exist [or *is not*].”⁹⁰ In this manner, Parmenides has just controverted the historical Parmenides’s “dogma,” and, by extension, Protagoras’s principle: *what*

is not in some sense *is*, and can be (or is necessarily) spoken of and known.

However, it is important to emphasize that Parmenides is making a stronger case here than the one suggested by Cornford. This comes across more clearly when Parmenides begins argument 5 anew: "If one is not, what are the consequences?" First, "there is knowledge of it; [otherwise] the very meaning of the words, 'if one is not,' would not be known." Second, "the others differ from it, or it could not be described as different from the others." In short, "difference . . . as well as knowledge" must belong to the *one* that *is not*, "for in speaking of the one as different from the others, we do not speak of a difference in the others, but in the one" (160d–e).

So Parmenides is telling us in effect that we know the meaning of the subject of H5 because its meaning is not unknown. In addition, it must be true that *other* things are different from the *one* because we have spoken of the *one* as being different from (or *not*) them. The problem is that since Parmenides does not tell us what the *one* and the *others* mean, it is impossible to "know" if they are indeed different and if they are, in what sense they are different. To say the least, as Scolnicov also points out, "it is not immediately clear that the one that *is not* can have difference predicated of it."⁹¹ I add that Parmenides will not provide a clearer justification for this predication.

Parmenides says next that the *one* that *is not* "is something and partakes of relation to 'that,' and 'this,' and 'these,' and the like, and is an attribute of 'this.'" Once again, the meaning of the supposition remains unclear. Anything, including the *one* (negative or positive) and the *others*, can be referred to as "that" or "something" and related to as "this" or "these" and so on. Indeed, Parmenides makes this point himself: whatever it is that we are speaking of must be a "something" and have all these "characters." Otherwise, once again, it "could not have been spoken of, nor could any attribute or relative of the one that is not have been or been spoken of, nor could it have been said to be anything" (160e). Still, the *one* that *is not* has not been shown to be any different from the things that are said to be different from it. All we have gotten from Parmenides thus far is that we know they are different, otherwise we could not have spoken of them.

How are we, then, to establish this difference? Parmenides provides the following answer: "Being, then, cannot be ascribed to the one, since it is not; but the one that is not may, or rather must, [partake of] many things, if it and nothing else is not." What differentiates the *one* that *is not* from the *others* is the fact that, unlike the *others*, it lacks *being*. Parmenides seems to be saying here that the *one* itself *is*

not, or does not have *being*, yet it *is* many things, since it has many attributes. Once again, it has many attributes other than *being*, simply because, in speaking of the *one* that *is not*, we are supposing something that has many attributes but is different from the *others* that *are* (160e–161a). This, of course, is a fallacious conclusion, for anything that *has* many attributes necessary *is* something and, for this reason, cannot lack *being*.

Cornford tries to avoid this fallacy by translating the present text differently. He claims that the supposition “if the one is not” means “if the one does not exist.” If so, “although the one cannot have existence,” nothing prevents it from “having many characters.”⁹² Since Parmenides has distinguished the *one* from the *others* in this very respect, Cornford’s reading of it suggests that the *one* does not exist, whereas the *others* do exist. However, even Cornford’s reading of H5 will not be able to avoid all the fallacies Parmenides is about to engender.

Parmenides now proceeds to deduce more consequences from the ambiguous premise that the *one* of H5 is different from the *others*. “And it will have unlikeness in relation to the others, for the others being different from the one will be of a different kind.” It follows that the *one* that *is not* and the *others* that *are* will be “unlike” each other. “And if unlikeness to other things is attributed to it, [the *one* we are supposing] . . . must have likeness to itself” (161a–b).⁹³

This argument, I take it, implies that the *one* is like itself, just in the very respect in which the *one is not* and the *others are*. The coherence of this deduction depends on assuming that “is not” is a negative statement of a positive attribute.⁹⁴ However, Parmenides goes on to assert that if we were to say the *one* we are supposing is unlike itself, we would necessarily suppose, or “mean,” “something else.” In other words, our supposition would be about something other than the *one* we are speaking of. From this reasoning follow the conclusions, once again, that “the one must have likeness to itself,” no likeness to the others, and no unlikeness to itself (161b–c).

Notice how the last conclusion is justified with the already-familiar assertion: Parmenides says, in effect, that if we were to say “it is unlike itself,” we would be talking about something else and not of the *one* we are supposing. This conclusion is problematic for at least two related reasons. First, it is only valid if we take *unlike* to mean *completely different*. This position is consistent with Zeno’s dictum that “like things cannot be unlike” and with Protagoras’s assertion that “Socrates ill” has nothing in common with “Socrates in health.”⁹⁵ Of course, this position is absurd. Second, by saying that it has many

attributes, Parmenides has already unwittingly assumed that the *one* we are supposing has some sense of unlikeness within itself. In what follows, he will give the *one* even more contrary attributes and will further necessitate the conclusion that it has unlikeness to itself.

Next, Parmenides asserts that "the one is not equal to the others" because if the *one* we are speaking of "were equal" to the *others*, "then it would at once be [exist; cf. Cornford] and be like them in virtue of the equality; but if [the] one has no being [or if it does not exist], then it can neither be nor be like" the *others*. Since the *one* and the *others* are unlike in the sense that they are "not equal" to each other, it follows that they must be "unequal." In short, "the one [we are supposing] partakes of inequality, and in respect of this the others are unequal to it" (161c–d).

Parmenides has ruled out the possibilities of likeness and equality on the ground that the expression "the one is not" means the *one* does not have *being* or, alternatively, the *one* does not exist.⁹⁶ If Parmenides means to say the *one* does not have any *being* and, as such, it is "unequal" to the *others*, his deduction would be "*ex hypothesi* false" (cf. Cornford). This is because being "unequal" implies having measure, and to have measure implies having some sense of *being*. Thus Cornford charitably says again that Parmenides is referring only to the nonexistence of the *one*, which nevertheless has *being*. In this way, it can both have this measure and be "unequal" to the *others* without having to exist: "We can in fact know about any non-existent quantity that it must be (if we do not take 'be' to imply existence) either greater or less than *any other* (different) quantity, whether existent or not."⁹⁷ However, Cornford's conjecture cannot explain why Parmenides says the *one* cannot be *equal* to the others. Surely "any non-existent quantity" can also be known to be *equal* to "*any other*" quantity. In order to save Parmenides's denial of equality as the *one*'s attribute, Cornford has to admit that the *one* has no *being*, and therefore cannot be equal to something else. But if he admits this, Parmenides's conclusion that the *one* is "unequal" to the others would also be "*ex hypothesi* false," for saying that it *is* "unequal" would imply that the *one* has *being*. Parmenides's argument cannot be helped.

Moreover, Parmenides's claim that since they cannot be equal, the *one* and the *others* must be "unequal" is fallacious, regardless of whether he says the *one* has no *being* or the *one* does not exist. Clearly, not being equal does not necessarily make two things "unequal."⁹⁸

Furthermore, adds Parmenides, "inequality implies greatness and smallness, and accordingly these must belong to such a one as we are describing. Now greatness and smallness are always kept apart from

one another. So there is always something between them, and this can only be equality. Accordingly, anything that has greatness and smallness has also equality between the two. So [the] one which does not exist [or have being] . . . has equality, greatness, and smallness" (161d-e).

Again, we cannot legitimately argue that the *one* that does not have any *being* has any of the attributes Parmenides has just enumerated, though we can argue that a nonexistent *one* can indeed have them. Whether it is attached to an existent entity or can be simply "thought of" (cf. Cornford), any given quantity implies equality, greatness, and smallness. However, even if we grant Cornford's reading to save the present argument, we must acknowledge that it makes a previous deduction absurd. This is because the presence of greatness and smallness in it makes the nonexistent *one* have contrary attributes and thus requires Parmenides to admit that the *one* has some sense of unlikeness to itself; Parmenides categorically denied this earlier. Moreover, given that the nonexistent *one* has measure, including equality, we must suppose that it has some sense of likeness to the *others*; Parmenides denied this too. This is because the *others*, we were told, also bear the measure of inequality, and this implies, according to the present assumption, greatness, smallness, and equality.⁹⁹ In short, as Miller also notes, "the final step," which says that the *one* "has a share in equality and greatness and smallness," "contradicts" both the claim that the *one* is not (cannot be) "equal to the others" and the earlier claim that the *one* has only "unlikeness toward the others."¹⁰⁰ I add that it also contradicts the claim that the *one* has only likeness and no unlikeness toward itself.

"Further," the *one* that *is not* must "partake of being" in some sense (161e). This assertion strongly implies that earlier on, at 160e, Parmenides meant to say the *one* lacks *being* and not existence. This implication is further supported by the fact that he is about to explain how the *one* he is supposing partakes of both *being* and not-*being*. In other words, the emphasis is on *being* and not-*being* and not on existing and not-existing.

Be that as it may, the present claim is supported by the already-familiar sophism: the *one* must possess *being*, "for if not, then we should not speak the truth in saying that the one is not. But if we speak the truth, clearly we must say what is . . . And since we affirm that we speak truly, we must also affirm that we say what is" (161e-162a). This assertion leaves no room for falsehood; whatever we say not only "must be" but also must be "true."¹⁰¹ Clearly, Plato intends to remind us once again that Parmenides is utilizing the "principle" and

"dogma" of the historical Parmenides and Protagoras. Since they assume that whatever we say both *is* and is *true*, they must also accept that *what is not* both *is* and can be truly spoken of. The problem for them is doubled by the inference that they must also accept the ensuing fallacies.

What then is the "sense" in which the *one* that *is not* must possess "being"? This is Parmenides's laborious answer: (1) "the one which is not, if it is to maintain itself, must have the being of not-being as the bond of not-being, just as [2] being must have as a bond the not-being of not-being in order to perfect its own being." Parmenides attempts to clarify both (1) and (2) in the following manner: "The truest assertion of the being of being and of the not-being of not-being is when being partakes of the being of being, and not of the being of not-being—that is, the perfection of being; and when not-being does not partake of the not-being of not-being but of the being of not-being—that is the perfection of not-being" (162a–b).

The presentation given here is almost gibberish. I think Parmenides is simply trying to say the following: (1) the *one* that *is not* still *is* something—namely, something that *is* other than what is negatively predicated of it. The meaning of (2) is convoluted by a double negative. The *one* that *is* simply is what is positively predicted of it; thus it *is not* what it is not. Somehow, he takes the double negative to imply the partaking of the *one* in not-*being* (in *is not*), whereas, so it seems, the two negatives should cancel each other out. Of course, the precise meaning of these assertions, and whether or not they are sound, depends on the type of predication both the *one is not* and the *one is* entail and on what type of entity the *one* denotes. Of these, I am not sure.¹⁰² What is certain is that Parmenides, who in part I has repeatedly belittled Socrates for being unclear, has proven to be far more obscure than Socrates.

At any rate, Parmenides concludes from the foregoing that (2) "what is partakes of not-being," and (1) "what is not of being." Since (1) is true, then the *one* of H5, which also *is not*, must "partake of being in order not to be." In conclusion, the *one* that *is not* "clearly has being" and "not-being" (162b).

Parmenides goes on to discuss the subject of H5 with respect to motion and rest in a series of bewildering deductions. With Aristoteles's enthusiastic agreement, he begins by saying that it is "impossible" for "anything which is in a certain state not [to] be in that state without changing." In other words, a thing that is in a particular state can only be in another state by abandoning its initial state. It follows from this premise that "everything which is and is not in a certain state, implies

change” and that “change is motion.” Since it “has been proved” in the foregoing discussion that the *one* both *is* (has *being*) and *is not* (has not-*being*), then “the one that is not has been shown to have motion also, because it changes from being to not-being” (162b–c).

This conclusion contradicts the previous one, on which it is explicitly said to depend. It is stated now that since the *one* both *is* and *is not*, it must be capable of motion. However, we are also told that it can be in only one of these states at a time and moves from one state to the other without ever being in both states. In other words, these two states are mutually exclusive: the *one* either *is* or *is not*, whereas Parmenides has concluded earlier that the *one* that *is not* also *is* at the same time.¹⁰³

Parmenides’s new account mimics the arguments of the appendix, and thus implies its absurdities. If “is not” means not-*being*, then we have to assume that a nonentity is capable of both motion (change or becoming) and acquiring *being* out of nothing. If, on the other hand, we assume that *is not* refers to a specific attribute of the *one*—say, unity—then we have to assume that the *one* becomes only many by abandoning its unity, for it cannot be both at once.

Against what he has just told us, Parmenides now proceeds to argue that the *one* cannot be in motion. “But surely if it is nowhere among what is, as is the fact, since it is not, it cannot change from one place to another.” As we will see next, Parmenides reasons that the absence of motion requires the *one* that *is not* to be at rest. Since it is absurd to say something *is* at rest when it has no *being*, let us charitably assume that he is here speaking of a nonexistent entity.¹⁰⁴ If so, since real motion requires existing in an actual place, a thing that does not exist anywhere cannot have real motion. (Let us not give Parmenides too much trouble by insisting that unicorns fly.) It follows from this restriction that “it cannot move by changing place,” since, as a nonexistent entity, it is not in that place anyway. It also follows that the nonexistent *one* cannot “turn [revolve] on the same spot, for it nowhere touches the same, for the same is [a place that exists, or *is*], and that which is not cannot be reckoned among things that are.” (The comment about touching seems superfluous.) Therefore, “the one, if it is not, cannot turn in that in which it is not” (162c–d).

This conclusion, which denies motion (broadly conceived) makes the previous conclusion untenable. If we accept the charitable reading of it, its reasoning is solely that the *one* we are supposing cannot be in motion because it does not exist anywhere. On the basis of this reasoning, we have to assume that the *one* that is capable of motion, as it is in the previous argument, is a thing that exists. In order to avoid the

contradiction between these two arguments, we have to suppose that Parmenides considered a *thing* that exists in the previous argument and an entity that does not exist in the last argument. However, if he supposed a *thing* that exists in the previous argument, then he had no right to say that this *thing* either *is* or *is not x*. To wit, it is absurd to say that Socrates either has unity or is many, but cannot achieve both at the same time, or that he moves from one state to the opposite state without ever being both.

The next deduction says, "Neither can the one, whether it is or is not, be altered into other than itself, for if it altered and became different from itself, then we could not be still speaking of the one, but of something else" (162d).¹⁰⁵ The familiar, bogus reasoning utilized here is repeated at 161b, where Parmenides claims that the *one* must be like itself and that this means it cannot be unlike itself. If we were to say it is unlike itself, which is deemed impossible anyway, we would be talking about something else. In other words, we cannot talk about the *one* as if it were unlike itself, since the *one* is unalterable and thus always the same. In the present context, too, the assumption is that what we are speaking of cannot alter its character. If it did, we would be talking about something else. It follows from this reasoning not only that whatever we say is true but also that the object of our discourse cannot alter itself.¹⁰⁶ Once again, this absurd reasoning is borrowed from the historical Parmenides (with a Protagorian twist), who says we are always speaking the truth, or of *what is*—namely, that which is always the same "immovable," unchanging entity (PP, VIII.4, VIII.26, VIII.38).

The last two arguments, which deny the possibility of motion and alteration of character, are combined to achieve the following result: "If the one neither suffers alteration, nor turns round in the same place, nor changes place," then it is not "capable of [any kind of] motion." For this reason, it "must surely be at rest" (162d).

"Surely" this conclusion is only valid if we suppose that the *one* that is *not* in motion at all is a *thing* that *exists* in a place. If it is an existent thing that exists in a place, then it must be capable of motion and must be both one and many at the same time. If, on the other hand, it cannot be in a place, then it can neither be at rest nor exist. In short, the argument for the *one's* being at rest depends on it being an existent entity, and the argument for its lack of motion depends on it being a nonexistent entity. We cannot say these are legitimate arguments in their own respects, for the *one's* being at rest is strictly derived from its lacking motion. In short, the whole argument is another sophistry,

which says, in effect, that the (negative) *one* is at rest as an existent thing because it is not in motion as a nonexistent entity.

The foregoing series on motion and rest culminates into the following conclusion: "The one that is not, stands still, and is also in motion" (162e). This conclusion inherits the problems I have enumerated in the previous discussion.

Parmenides reminds us of how we have seen that "that which is unmoved, and that which is at rest must stand still." If it is "in motion, it must necessarily undergo alteration, for anything which is moved, in so far as it is moved, is no longer in the same state, but in another." Therefore, "in so far as the one that is not is moved, it is altered, but in so far as it is not moved, it is not altered." It follows from this that "the one that is not is altered and is not altered" but cannot be in both states at the same time. Once again, if the *one* Parmenides is supposing is capable of motion and rest, then it must be an existential *thing*, which, in some sense, *is not*. Parmenides assumes fallaciously again that this *thing* cannot be in different states at the same time in any sense: "That which is altered" must "become other than it previously was, and lose its former state and be destroyed [or ceases to be what it was]; but that which is not altered can neither come into being nor be destroyed." In short, when "being altered, [it] becomes [changes] and is destroyed [ceases to be]" and when "not being altered, neither becomes nor is destroyed; and so the one that is not becomes and is destroyed, and neither becomes nor is destroyed" (162e–163b).

As we have seen, argument 5 entails many ambiguities and fallacies, which are often supported by the claim that what is spoken and thought of both *is* and *is true*. This claim is the main hallmark of argument 5, which, in my view, has failed to make much sense, not to mention make any Platonic sense, of the supposition it exercised.¹⁰⁷ By arguing that what *is not* can indeed be spoken of, argument 5 contradicts the historical Parmenides's own principle. Plato doubled this contradiction by making Parmenides make false and self-contradictory arguments and then say they must be true because he is speaking of them. The historical Parmenides (and Protagoras) simply cannot say the arguments are false. If, on the other hand, he accepts their validity, then he has to admit that *what is not* can be spoken of and so named. It is no coincidence that argument 6 once again reminds us of the historical Parmenides's dictum to the effect that we cannot think or speak of *what is not*.

ARGUMENT 6: SPEAKING OF THE NEGATIVE ONE, WHICH WE CANNOT SPEAK OF

Parmenides tells Aristoteles, "Let us go back once more to the beginning, and see whether [the consequences given in argument 5] or some other consequences will follow" from the same question asked in argument 5—namely, if the *one* is not, "what will happen in respect of one?" (163b–c). Clearly, Plato meant to have Parmenides contradict the assumptions and conclusion of argument 5 in argument 6.¹⁰⁸

Immediately, we find different, even contradictory, consequences of the present supposition for the *one* itself. The "words 'is not' signify absence of being in that to which we apply them." If so, "when we say that a thing is not . . . we [do not] mean that it is not in one way but is in another." Rather, "we mean, absolutely, that what is not" does not partake of *being* in any way (163c).

There is no indication here to the effect that Parmenides is confirming the meaning of *is not* that he deduced in argument 5 or that he is reinforcing the conclusions of argument 5.¹⁰⁹ In other words, he is not saying, let us alter the meaning of our supposition in argument 6. He is explicitly using the same supposition but deriving a different conclusion from it. We must note, too, that the conclusion just drawn from H6 is fallacious. Clearly, the "words 'is not'" do not *necessarily* "signify [the absolute] absence of being in that to which we apply them." As our Parmenides has told us in the previous argument, though on many obscure and fallacious grounds, they may indeed signify some sense of *being*.

To say the least, Plato (cf. *Sophist*) does not accept this conclusion, which can be attributed to the historical Parmenides. The latter says in his poem that "surely it is adjudged, as it needs must be, that we are to set aside . . . [the] way [of *is not*] as unthinkable and nameless (for it is no true way), and that the other path [of *is*] is real and true" (VIII.16–19). Likewise, in what follows, our Parmenides will conclude that *what is not* is absolutely nothing and cannot be thought of, spoken of, or named. The ensuing deductions that lead to this conclusion are sound, though only insofar as we accept the fallacious premise—namely, that *is not* necessarily means the absolute absence of *being*. Moreover, there is a self-defeating reasoning in Parmenides's conclusion to argument 6: he speaks of *what is not* and concludes that it cannot be spoken of. Plato notes this problem in *Sophist* (see Chapter 4).

As for the overall (in)coherence of our Parmenides's quest to discover "the truth" in part II, he is about to contradict all the conclusions

reached in argument 5 by undoing them in the reverse order in which they were presented. Once again, it is made explicitly clear that he views the ensuing deductions in opposition to the ones he presented in argument 5. In this manner, he reminds Aristoteles that they had, in argument 5, accepted the conclusion that “by becoming, and being destroyed,” the *one* that *is not* acquires *being* and loses *being*. This conclusion is now flatly rejected: “That which has no participation in being” cannot “either assume [acquire] or lose being” (163d). With this rejection at hand, Parmenides proceeds to reject the rest of the conclusions of argument 5.¹¹⁰

It follows from the last conclusion that the *one*, “since it in no way is, cannot have or lose or assume being in any way.” If so, “the one that is not, since it in no way partakes of being, neither perishes nor becomes,” for these states of being, too, would imply that, in some sense, the *one is*. If it neither “becomes” nor “perishes,” then it also cannot be “altered at all; for if it were it would become and be destroyed,” which, it was just concluded, is impossible. If it is not altered, then it “cannot be moved . . . Nor can we say that it stands [or is at rest], if it is nowhere; for that which . . . [is at rest] must always be in one and the same spot [place].” In conclusion, “we must say that the one which is not never stands still and never moves” (163d–e).

Further, if the *one is not* at all, no positive characteristics “can be attributed to it,” for such attributes would imply that it “partakes of being.” For this reason, it cannot be said that it has “smallness,” “greatness,” “equality,” “likeness,” or “difference,” “either in relation to itself or to others.” If so, “other things can neither be like or unlike, the same, or different in relation to it.” Nor can what *is not* be of “this,” “that,” or “other” character. Thus we cannot say that it is “something.” To add to these, the *one* that *is not* also cannot exist in time and *be* in the “past, present, or future” (163e–164b).

If “the one that is not has no condition of any kind”—that is, if nothing can be said to be “of it”—then there also cannot be any “knowledge, or opinion, or perception, or expression [discourse], or name, or any other thing that is” *of it* (164b).

As I have noted already, argument 6 systematically contradicts argument 5 and undermines the coherence of part II as a whole.¹¹¹ The main premise and conclusions of argument 6 are readily acceptable to the historical Parmenides. However, in Plato’s estimation, he cannot easily object to the premise and conclusions of argument 5, for this would imply that it is possible to speak of what is not. Also, argument 6 argues not only that we cannot say anything of *what is absolutely not* but also that *is not* necessarily means the complete “absence of being.”

This is a fallacious reasoning, which Plato problematizes in *Sophist* (see Chapter 4). For this reason, argument 6 is not a Platonic argument.¹¹² Lastly, and relatedly, no one should conclude that argument 6 refutes the middle-period TF.¹¹³

ARGUMENT 7: IF THE *ONE* IS NOT, THE *OTHERS* APPEAR TO BE

As we will see in Chapter 4, it is abundantly clear that argument 7 exercises Protagoras's doctrine, which is parodied in *Theaetetus*.¹¹⁴ Arguments 7 and 8 ask the same basic question: "If one is not, what becomes of the others?" (164b).¹¹⁵ Parmenides's initial answer to this question is based on the following already-familiar sophism: "The others must surely be; for if they, like the one, were not, we could not be now speaking of them." This is the only proof given for "the others" in argument 7.¹¹⁶ Plato must have been alive to the obvious silliness of Parmenides's present claim, which is repeated many times also in argument 5. The first dilemma that glares at us in the present context is this: if "speaking of" something secures its *being*, then the *one* that *is not* must also in some sense *be*, for Parmenides has just spoken of it. Yet the *one* that *is not* is assumed not to be.

Parmenides adds that since "the terms 'other' and 'different' are synonymous," when we "speak of the others," we necessarily mean "difference" or that the others are different things. Since "other" means other than another thing, and "the different" thing we speak of must be different from another thing, it follows that if the *others are* and if they are different, there must be things other than (different from) the *others* we are speaking of. However, the *others* "will not be other than the one," for we have said that "the one is not." It follows that "they will be other than each other." In short, given the complete absence of the *one* and given that there must be something other than the *others*—the latter cannot be "other than nothing"—the components of the *others* are each other's other (164b–c).

This argument clearly implies that the *one* of H7 is "nothing"; if it were something, then it would be the other of the *others*. As it should be obvious, this is a fallacious reasoning; Parmenides's earlier dictum requires him to say that the *one* we are speaking of must be something, since what we are speaking of must both *be* and be *different*. Moreover, his equation of the *one* with "nothing" also undermines the difference he found within the *others*. "If one is not," continues Parmenides, the *others* are each other's other merely as undifferentiated, limitless multitudes (masses) and not as "singular," distinct

things (ones). This is because if there is no *one* at all, then the *others* cannot have any sense of oneness (unity) in them (164c–d).¹¹⁷

We were told in argument 3 (158c–d) that the participant *one* (Form of Unity) supplies the limit, and the limit makes possible the differences within the *others* (as wholes and parts). If so, the abolition of the *one* in the present context requires us to conclude that the *others*, lacking any sense of unity, cannot have any limits and thus cannot entail any difference. So we might ask, how could they be different things without any real difference? Plato's intention here is to introduce the Protagorean doctrine of appearing: things only appear to be different because we perceive, think, and say they are different. Indeed, everything only *is* what it appears to us.

For instance, "what appears to be the smallest" part of the *others*, "in a moment" or instantly, "becomes very great." Likewise, as "in a dream," what appears to be one part suddenly "evanesces into many"; what appears to have a limit turns out to be unlimited.¹¹⁸ Since there is no *one*, each one (part) of the *others* will only appear to be one thing/part. "If each of them [only] appears to be one, . . . it would seem that number can be predicated of" the *others*. In other words, they will appear to have number.¹¹⁹ From the premise of the appearance of number in them follows the conclusion that the apparent parts of the *others* will also appear "to be odd and even," though not really being so, if the *one is not*. (In other words, both "odd and even" imply unity, and not really having unity makes the *others* only appear to have these attributes.) Repetitiously, Parmenides adds again that "there will appear to be a least [*a* smallest possible part] among them; and even this [one part] will seem large and manifold in comparison with the many small fractions which are contained in it." Moreover, since "it could not have appeared to pass from the greater to the less without having appeared to arrive at the middle [i.e., equality]," a part, which is not really a part, would have "the appearance of equality." Thus each part of the *others* "will be imagined to be equal to the many" smaller fractions of itself (164d–165a). The implication here is that the numerical one will appear to be equal to more than one, and a part will appear to be equal to a fraction of itself in magnitude. In other words, appearances will be contradictory.

Also, the use of the word "imagined" in the previous passage is meant to underscore the Protagorean meaning of appearance as perception. This clue will be repeated in the following passage as fixing one's thought on something or grasping it. Parmenides concludes next that, if the *one is not*, each part "appears to have a limit in relation

to itself and other," even though it does not *really* have a "beginning," "middle," or "end." This is so because "when a person conceives of any one of these" parts as having these three attributes, "prior to the beginning another beginning appears, and there is another end, remaining after the end, and in the middle . . . [other middles within the middle of the middle] but smaller [than it], because no [real] unity can be conceived of any of them, since the one is not." If so, "every being that you grasp in thought must . . . be chopped and dispersed, because surely, without oneness, it would always be grasped as a [limitless] mass."¹²⁰

Somewhat abruptly, Parmenides adds that since each thing we grasp "is deprived of the one," to a person seeing it from "a distance," the thing will appear "to be one," but to a person examining it more closely, it will appear to be infinite (possibly meaning without limit or infinite in number of parts). In conclusion, "each of the others must appear to be infinite and finite, and one and many, if others than the one exist and not the one." With a similar analogy, Parmenides says next that the *others* "will appear to be like and unlike." How so? "Just as in a picture things appear to be all one to a person standing at a distance, and to be in the same state and alike" and just as they "appear to be many and different," and thus "unlike," to a person who approaches the painting (165a–d). It is highly likely that Plato's use of *distance* as an analogy here is meant to remind us of Protagoras's sense-perception relativism.¹²¹

Parmenides and Aristoteles both agree that the following conclusions could be "easily" shown to follow for the *others* from the supposition "if the *one is not*": the *others* "must" appear to "be the same and yet different from one another, and in contact with themselves, although they are separated [and hence not in contact], and having every sort of motion, and every sort of rest, and becoming and being destroyed, and in neither state, and the like" (165d–e).

However, it was said at the beginning (164b–c) that since "we are speaking of them," "the others must surely be" and be different. It seems that there is another play on "is" and "appears" here to indicate the Protagorean equation, or rather, equivocation, of these two terms. Moreover, it is very difficult to accept the view that Plato took this "dream" theory of appearances seriously, and it is inconceivable that he expounded his own views in argument 7. As we will see in Chapter 4, *Theaetetus* firmly endorses my conclusion.¹²²

ARGUMENT 8: IF THE *ONE* IS NOT, THE *OTHERS* NEITHER APPEAR TO BE NOR ARE ANYTHING

As we will see in this section, since he is pursuing the same hypothesis in both arguments, Parmenides explicitly notes that he is producing results that are contrary to the results of argument 7. It follows from this observation that *we* cannot accept the conclusions of both arguments. However, Parmenides gives no indication to the effect that he deems either argument more acceptable than the other. In other words, arguments 7 and 8 together once again undermine the overall coherence of Parmenides's quest for "the truth." On the other hand, *we* may think of argument 8 as Plato's criticism of Protagoras. As we will see in Chapter 4, the movement from argument 7 to 8 is repeated in *Theaetetus*, where it becomes clear that the former argument belongs to Protagoras, and the latter is owned by Socrates (Plato).

However, there seems to be an additional, perhaps related, critique in argument 8. Parmenides begins this very brief argument by saying, "Let us go back to the beginning, and ask if the one is not, and the others . . . are" and see "what will follow" for the *others* (165e). H8 supposes from the outset that the *others are*, but the *one is not*. As we are about to see, this is an impossible, self-defeating supposition. On the one hand, Parmenides will deduce from H8 the conclusion that the *others* cannot even *appear* to be in any sense. On the other hand, he will contradict the supposition that says the *others are* by arguing that, in the absence of the *one*, they cannot *be* at all. This makes it highly likely that Plato also has in mind the rigid "pluralists" who defended H8.

At any rate, Parmenides first deduces from H8 the conclusion that if the *one is not*, "the others" will be neither one nor "many." The reason is that "if they were many one would be contained in them. But if none of them is one, all of them are naught, and therefore they will not be many." In short, "if there be no one in the others, the others are neither many nor one" (165e).

Next, Parmenides challenges the theory of appearing presented in argument 7: if the *one is not*, then the *others* will not "appear either as one or many." Unless we recognize that this conclusion depends on Plato's theory of perception, his justification of it will seem out of place. For Plato (cf. *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*; see Chapter 4), perception has at least two prerequisites. First, the things we perceive must have abiding unity in them. Second, they must be able to relate (communicate) to each other on the basis of their abiding characteristics. If any sense of oneness is lacking in them, the *others* will be nothings and thus will not be able to have any "sort or manner or way of communion"

with one another; nor will any one of the *others* have any characteristics (parts in this sense), "for that which is not has no parts." If so, no "opinion or any appearance" of the things that *are not* is possible, nor could "not-being" be "in any way attributed to the others." Thus if the *one is not*, "there is no conception of any of the others either as one or many; for you cannot conceive the many without the one." In conclusion, if the *one is not*, "the others neither are, nor can be conceived [or appear] to be either one or many" (165e–166a).

Parmenides now takes it for granted that the *others* also cannot *be* "like or unlike," "the same or different," "in contact or separation"; nor can they be "in any of those states which we enumerated as appearing to be" in argument 7. If the *one is not*, "the others neither are, nor appear to be any of these." Then we would be speaking "truly," or correctly, if we were to "sum up the argument in a word and say," if the *one is not*, "then nothing is" (166b–c).

It is clear that Plato meant argument 8 to be a direct refutation of argument 7,¹²³ and then some, and that its conclusions, *we* may say, are essentially Platonic in character.¹²⁴ Yet in order to emphasize the overall incoherence of Parmenides's "laborious game," Plato keeps the conclusion of argument 8 as a part of Parmenides's entire exercise. For this reason, he allows Parmenides to incorporate this conclusion into the overall conclusion of part II.

THE FINAL CONCLUSION OF *PARMENIDES*

Parmenides's final conclusion combines the general conclusions of the entirety of part II: "Let thus much be said" (referring to the last conclusion), and also let us "affirm" that "whether one is or is not, one and the others in relation to themselves and one another, all of them, in every way, are and are not, and appear to be and appear not to be." "Most true," replies Aristoteles (166c).¹²⁵ As we see, none of the eight arguments' main conclusions has been ruled out, and none has been elevated to a privileged status.¹²⁶

When stated in this wholesale manner, the final conclusion fails miserably to meet Parmenides's promise—namely, that his method is necessary to discern "the truth." Nothing indicates here that Plato meant Parmenides to say that this conclusion is only "ostensible" and that there is a real conclusion hidden somewhere in the text.¹²⁷ The conclusion is loud and clear: the exercise has failed to deliver the "truth." The future tyrant, Aristoteles, is not aware of the problem. "Most true," he says of the final conclusion.

Since the conclusion speaks against two Eleatic-sophist taboos—only the *one* is, and *that which is not* cannot be uttered—the result is once again devastating to the historical Parmenides. It shows that the *one is* and *is not* “all manner of things in all manner of ways,” positively, negatively, and apparently. It may be objected that this result is “absurd” and does little to undermine the historical Parmenides’s doctrine. However, our Parmenides has no right to appeal the verdict, for he has utilized the Eleatic-sophist method to generate this result. More significantly, the historical Parmenides (and Protagoras) cannot say the result (or any one of the results) is fallacious, for this would force him to accept that we can indeed talk and think about *what is not*—or alternatively, that what we say does not always correspond to *what is*.

Given that Parmenides accepted the mission of discovering the truth, it is unlikely that Plato made him combine his results twice—at the end of argument 4 and here—for no other reason than simply recapitulating his exercises.¹²⁸ Considerations similar to mine have led Allen to conclude that the “absurd” conclusion is “required by the structure and argument of all that has gone before.”¹²⁹ However, there is clearly more to part II than making a structurally *aporetic* general argument, based on numerous fallacies, absurdities, and contradictions. As I have been arguing, with the exception of arguments 3 and 8, all the arguments of part II, and the problems entailed in them, are attributable to Plato’s philosophical opponents. This also means that no new Platonic TF issues from part II. However, admittedly, these claims remain to be demonstrated more conclusively than I have done in the foregoing chapters. I attempt to provide such a demonstration in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4



PARMENIDES IN *THEAETETUS* AND *SOPHIST*

INTRODUCTION

Parmenides, *Theaetetus*, and *Sophist* are (almost certainly) three sequential dialogues. Neither *Theaetetus* nor *Sophist* gives credence to the views that, beginning with *Parmenides*, Plato had either abandoned¹ or significantly revised² the middle-period theory of Forms (TF). Instead, these three dialogues share an important mission, which is to refute the related (according to Plato) doctrines of the Eleatics and sophists.³

Theaetetus is essentially a critical dialogue, not of Plato's ideas, but of those of his opponents. Moreover, various arguments in *Theaetetus* repeat important aspects of the middle-period theory, even though the main aim of this dialogue is to criticize other theories of knowledge, including that of Protagoras.⁴ *Sophist*, on the other hand, mainly criticizes the historical Parmenides and, to a lesser extent, other philosophical doctrines. In spite of its innovative but faltering approach to Forms, this dialogue also remains committed to the fundamental characteristics of the middle-period TF. Besides, the innovations found in *Sophist* do not in any demonstrable way derive from *Parmenides*.

More important for the purposes of the present book, both *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* provide compelling evidence in support of the view that *Parmenides* is largely a satirical refutation of Eleatics and sophists. Briefly stated, we find unmistakable traces of arguments 7 and 8 in *Theaetetus*. In this dialogue, Plato attributes the logic of argument 7 to Protagoras and criticizes the latter's doctrine in a manner that parallels the views expressed in argument 8. *Theaetetus* also

displays Plato's willingness to satirize the doctrines of his opponents with sophisms. *Sophist* clarifies how arguments 1, 2, and 6 are of Parmenidean origin. Plato argues explicitly that Parmenides subscribes to something like hypothesis 1 (H1), but his doctrine actually implies hypothesis 2 (H2) in a self-contradictory manner. Also, much of *Sophist* is based on Plato's criticism of the Parmenidean view presented in argument 6. Strong traces of argument 5 are also found in both *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, which link various aspects of this argument to Plato's aforementioned opponents. *Sophist* attributes a version of argument 4 to the unnamed "friends of forms" (Friends). As we will see, much like in argument 4, Plato's refutation of Friends cannot be construed as self-refutation.⁵ As we have seen in Chapter 3, argument 3 is a brief restatement of the TF. *Sophist* gives the same definition of Unity as that in hypothesis 3 (H3) and claims that Forms themselves are indivisible entities, even if some of them combine with the others. In short, a close reading of both *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* confirms the interpretation of *Parmenides* that the present book has been defending all along.

PLATO'S CRITIQUE OF PROTAGORAS IN *THEAETETUS*

Prelude to *Theaetetus*

Theaetetus discusses three definitions, or theories, of knowledge. Plato, through the mouth of Socrates, concludes at the end of this dialogue that "neither perception [first definition], nor true belief [second definition], nor the addition of an 'account' to true belief [third definition] can be knowledge" (Plato, *Theaetetus*, 210a–b).⁶ In this chapter, I focus on the first part of *Theaetetus*, where Plato criticizes the first definition, which he attributes to Protagoras.

Theaetetus is narrated by the fictional Euclides to Terpsion of Megara. The historical Euclides was Socrates's student and the founder of the Megaric school. The little information we have of Euclides suggests that his philosophy moralized the Parmenidean *one* (*Being*) by identifying it with the Socratic Good. While there is some evidence to the effect that he engaged in eristic disputation, it is not clear how far he went with it. We know that his followers, such as Eubulides and Stilpo, had strong sophistical-methodological inclinations. Like Zeno, they attacked the doctrines that defended plurality and motion. Their enthusiasm for disputation often made them lose sight of their

teacher's focus on the *one*. At any rate, Megarics depicted an experiential world without any certainty.⁷

Perhaps, by using Euclides to narrate a conversation in which Socrates is the main character, Plato meant to remind the Megarics of Euclides's intimate connection to Socrates and that the latter was in the habit of mocking sophists. Indeed, Euclides informs Terpsion that he had heard the ensuing conversation from Socrates himself, wrote it down, and confirmed its contents with Socrates on numerous occasions (142c–d). Euclides's intimacy with Socrates is also confirmed in *Phaedo*, which tells us that the former, together with Terpsion and others, was present during the latter's final hours (59c).

The fictional conversation we have before us takes place between Socrates, Theodorus (a renowned mathematician and Protagoras's friend), and a young man named Theaetetus (also a renowned, real-life mathematician). Theaetetus's friend Socrates (Socrates's namesake) is also present but joins the conversation only in *Statesman*. On several occasions, Protagoras is conjured up to defend himself and thus also plays a direct role in the conversation.⁸

Socrates is interested in discovering "young men" who are "thought likely to distinguish themselves." Theodorus recommends Theaetetus, who is Socrates's look-alike. Upon Theodorus's invitation, Theaetetus joins them for a discussion (*Theaetetus*, 143d–144c). Socrates quickly reminds his audience that he is "the son of a midwife, a fine buxom woman called Phaenarete!" He too practices the art of midwifery, though his art is concerned "with the soul." Socrates confesses that he can only help the others, but he himself cannot "give birth to wisdom." His inborn gifts also include "the power to prove by every test" whether or not the thoughts of others are worth keeping. Moreover, he is "not permitted to acquiesce in falsehood and suppress the truth" (148d–151d).

It is sufficiently clear that Socrates's self-description is a deliberate attempt to distinguish himself from sophists, who profess to teach wisdom for a handsome fee (we are told later in the dialogue that Protagoras is such a teacher of wisdom). Socrates's self-description also anticipates that he will not in this dialogue lay down a positive theory of his own. (However, by criticizing Protagoras's theory of knowledge, he will end up negatively suggesting a theory of his own.) Lastly, Socrates's claim that he will neither "acquiesce in falsehood" nor "suppress the truth" assumes the existence of falsehood.⁹ This is a significant assumption, which already anticipates opposition to Protagoras's denial of falsehood.

The following views are quickly accepted at the beginning of the dialogue: only the judgment of an expert is trustworthy (144c–145b), and the definition of knowledge, or anything else for that matter, must express “what the thing itself—knowledge—is” (145d–146e). In other words, what is needed in a proper definition is the identification of “a single character to embrace all [the] multitude”—that is, a common character “that applies to many kinds of knowledge” (147d–148d). These views are consistent with Plato’s middle-period theory, which assumes the participation of a single Form in many like things. The description of a proper definition here also anticipates Socrates’s opposition to Protagoras’s denial of the existence of a single, abiding character in anything. This suggests from the outset that any Protagorean definition is bound to fail Socrates’s criterion for a proper definition.

Protagoras’s Theory of Knowledge

Theaetetus defines knowledge as “nothing but perception.” According to Socrates, Theaetetus’s definition is consistent with the one “given by Protagoras.” Protagoras’s theory is based on the principle that “man is the measure of all things,” which means that “any given thing ‘is to me such as it appears to me, and is to you such as it appears to you,’ you and I being men.” As Protagoras sees it, the terms “appears,” “is,” and “truth” are identical. Socrates adds sarcastically that “what [this] wise man says is not likely to be nonsense” (151d–152a).

For instance, according to Protagoras, the wind “is cold to the [individual] who feels chilly, and not to the other” individual, who perceives it otherwise. Thus the temperature of the wind “so ‘appears’ to each” individual. “‘Appearing,’ then, is the same thing as ‘perceiving,’” and the temperature of the wind is solely determined by “each man such as he perceives” it. Since there is no standard of truth besides what each individual perceives, the knowledge of each individual is “infallible” (152a–c).

To elaborate further, the theory that Socrates attributes to Protagoras assumes that there is only incessant becoming. For instance, the attribute of whiteness simply arises “in a process of becoming.” The process is one in which the object of perception acts on the eye. According to Protagoras, “What we say ‘is’ this or that color will be neither the eye which encounters the motion nor the motion which is encountered, but something that has arisen between the two and is peculiar to each several percipient” (153d–154b). Protagoras thus says

that “nothing is”; everything “is always becoming,” even though we are linguistically forced to say something “is” (157d). In other words, nothing really *is*; what we ordinarily say *is*, is actually what *appears* to us in each instant of perception. To recall, we have observed in argument 7 a similarly curious shift from “is” to “appears,” which is now shown to be of Protagorian origin.

Protagoras’s doctrine, then, denies the existence of any objective reality apart from sense perception.¹⁰ Protagoras “declares that nothing is one thing just by itself . . . All the things we are pleased to say ‘are,’ really are in process of becoming, as a result of movement and change and of blending one with another. We are wrong to speak of them as ‘being,’ for none of them ever is; they are always [only] becoming.” This description puts Protagoras in the camp of the pure-flux theory. On this issue, “with the exception of Parmenides, the whole series of philosophers [and poets] agree.” The series includes “Protagoras, Heracleitus, Empedocles,” and the poets “Epicharmus” and “Homer” (152c–e).

Cratylus also points out that, according to Protagoras, “the truth is that things are as they appear to anyone” (386c). In *Cratylus*, as we have seen in Chapter 1, this claim is related to the convention theory of names, which says that whatever name we give to things is correct. “Whatever we say is true” is a correlate of this statement. In *Theaetetus*, “whatever we perceive is true,” or “whatever we perceive cannot be false,” amounts to an equivalent statement. In *Euthydemus*, the Protagoras-inspired sophists sum up these various versions of Protagoras’s theory as follows: “We make no mistake either in doing or in speaking or in thinking” (287a), though *Theaetetus* clarifies that Protagoras excludes “doing” from infallibility.

After having described Protagoras’s theory in his own terms, Socrates proceeds to tell Theaetetus “what sort of account would be given” by Protagoras himself. Protagoras’s “account” would say, “When one thing is entirely different from another, it cannot be in any respect capable of behaving in the same way as that other.” Thus, when we speak of two or more different things, we are “to understand that” the things “we speak of” are “entirely different.” Since “different” means “altogether different,” and thus entirely “unlike,” we “must admit” that the things we speak of are entirely “unlike” each other. If so, “if it happens that something comes to be like or unlike either itself or something else, we shall say that when it is made like it becomes the same, when unlike, different.” In short, being *like* itself or *like* something else is stated to mean being “the same,” and *different* is taken to mean having no likeness whatsoever. As the present

representative of Protagoras's view, Theaetetus confirms that this conclusion "necessarily" follows (*Theaetetus*, 158e–159a).

It follows from this (fallacious) premise that, for instance, "Socrates in health and Socrates ill," or each Socrates "taken as a whole," is "unlike" the other Socrates. This means that Socrates in health and Socrates ill are entirely different persons. For this reason, when any object acts upon him, it will act upon either Socrates in health or Socrates ill and will treat him, in each case, as "a different thing." In other words, in each case of perception, the "person" the object "finds is not really the same; for the one it now meets with is unlike the other." If so, the same wine (if we can even speak of such a thing as the same wine) will taste, or appear, different to the two different Socrases (159b–e).

As we have seen in Chapter 2, Zeno states in *Parmenides* that "unlike things cannot be like, nor like things unlike" (127d–e). However, whereas Zeno deduced from this premise the impossibility of the many (broadly defined), Protagoras here deduces from it the impossibility of the *one* (hence the Protagorian basis of the supposition "the one is not" in hypothesis 7). For him, all things are always unlike, or completely different (Zeno's Eleaticism requires him to say all are alike—that is, the same). It should be obvious that Plato does not subscribe to either view anywhere.¹¹

The question is, if there is no *one*, what sets the limit on each Socrates or on each thing that acts upon his senses? Protagoras's "account" gives the following answers:

(1) On my side, I shall never become percipient in just this way of any other thing; for to a different object belongs a different perception, and in acting on its percipient it is acting on a person who is in a different condition and so a different person. Also (2) on its side, the thing which acts on me can never meet with someone else and generate the same offspring and come to be of just this quality; for when it brings to birth another thing from another person, it will itself come to be of another quality . . . Further, (3) I shall not come to have this sensation for myself, nor will the object come to be of such a quality for itself. (*Theaetetus*, 159e–160a)

If there is no common perception, then it follows that "my perception is true for me [only]; for [the] object [of my perception] at any moment is my [perceived] reality [alone]." It is in this way that "I am, as Protagoras says, a judge of what is for me, that it is, and [the judge] of what is not, [namely,] that it is not" (160a–c).

As Myles Burnyeat rightly observes, the foregoing discussion attributes to Protagoras the view that “an object will appear different to different observers in the varying circumstances of observation.” The qualities of things are not inherent in them; they exist “only in relation to a given observer, ‘between’ their eye and the object, and is therefore private to [each observer], something of which only [each observer] can be aware.”¹² To answer the question I asked previously, the Protagorean limit is thus fleetingly set on each thing as an appearance of limit (or unity) in the equally fleeting act of perception.

This exposition of the Protagorean view sheds much light on the origin of some of the key arguments Parmenides makes in *Parmenides*, arguments 5 and 7. Argument 7, at 164b, begins by saying “if there is no one,” it “must be true” that the *others* are and that they are “different” from each other because we speak of them as different things. However, what we speak of as different things do not really have a limit and thus “appear” to be different, even opposite, things “as it might happen in a dream” (164c). Argument 5 repeatedly states that there must be knowledge of something, otherwise its meaning “would be unknown.” Moreover, “it must be true that other things are different from it, otherwise it could not be spoken of as different from them. So, besides being knowable, it must have difference in character, for when you speak of the one [thing] as different from the others, you are speaking of its difference in character, not of theirs” (160d–e). Parmenides also says what we are speaking of “must have the character of being *this* and many other characters as well” because we have spoken of it (160e). And again, “if we are speaking the truth, evidently the things we are speaking of must *be*. So, since we do claim to be speaking the truth, we must also assert that we are speaking of the things that are” (161e–162a). The only criterion given in argument 5 for why we have knowledge of something, and why it must be and be different from the others, is that we think and say it must be so. This criterion clearly draws from Protagoras’s *measure* principle.

Similarly, and returning to *Theaetetus*, the Protagorean *measure* principle assumes that “I am infallible and make no mistake in my state of mind about what is or becomes.” It also follows that I cannot “fail to have knowledge of the things of which I have perception.” It is in this Protagorean sense, says Socrates, that Theaetetus was “perfectly right in saying that knowledge is nothing but perception.” This is Theaetetus’s “newborn child,” which Socrates has “brought to birth.” His mental child “coincides” with “the doctrine of Homer and Heracleitus and all their tribe that all things move like flowing streams” and with “the doctrine of Protagoras, wisest of men, that

Man is the measure of all things" (160c–e). As it will soon become obvious, the reference to Protagoras as the "wisest of men" is no more than a joke.

Sophism against Sophism

As mentioned several times in Chapter 3, Plato in *Parmenides* engages in a double-edged refutation: fallacious arguments are attributed to an opponent, who denies falsehood. This strategy disarms the opponent, who would fall into self-contradiction if he or she were to accuse Plato of fallacious refutation. What we find in this section is an explicit utilization of this strategy against Protagoras.

Socrates says he is surprised that Protagoras does not say "the measure of all things is the pig, or the baboon, or some sentient creature still more uncouth." This remark is related to Protagoras's reduction of knowledge to sense perception. The implication is that such a reduction eliminates the distinction between the wise and the "uncouth," or even between animals and humans. If true, we can no longer say Protagoras, the "wisest man," is wiser "than a tadpole, to say nothing of any other human being." If Protagoras really believes what he says, then "where is the wisdom of Protagoras, to justify his setting up to teach others and to be handsomely paid for it, and where is our comparative ignorance or the need for us to go and sit at his feet, when each of us is himself the measure of his own wisdom." Theodorus, Protagoras's friend, admits that Protagoras's profession contradicts his doctrine (*Theaetetus*, 160e–162c).

Socrates suggests that Protagoras would likely have an answer to his provocative criticism. He would say to Socrates, "This is all clap-trap . . . You go entirely by what looks probable, without a word of argument or proof." Thus Socrates's "clap-trap" is no more than a false argument. Socrates thinks this would be a legitimate objection on Protagoras's part. Thus they "must attack the question in another way." The question to be attacked first is "whether knowledge and perception are, after all, the same thing or not" (162d–163a).

Socrates reasons that, if knowledge and perception were identical, then every act of knowing would necessarily involve perception. However, since there are other ways of knowing besides perception, knowledge and perception cannot be identical. For instance, we may reasonably say that "a man who has become acquainted with something and remembers it" knows what he remembers. We may "recognize such a thing as [a] memory . . . of something." If so, "a man sometimes remembers what he has seen," even "when he shuts

his eyes" (163d–e). Thus the claim that knowledge and perception are identical is false; saying "that knowledge and perception are the same thing . . . leads to an impossibility" (164b).

However, Socrates admits that he has been behaving like a sophist controversialist. "It seems to me," says Socrates, "we are behaving towards our theory like an ill-bred gamecock who springs away from his adversary and starts crowing over him before he is beaten." The reason is that they "were content to have reached an agreement [at 164b] resting on mere verbal consistency and to have got the better of the theory [of Protagoras] by the methods of a professional controversialist. We profess to be seeking wisdom, not competing for victory, but we are unconsciously behaving just like one of those redoubtable disputants" (164c–d). In short, they have been behaving like sophists against the founding father of sophism—namely, Protagoras.

After warning against sophism, it is only befitting for the sarcastic Socrates to give a fallacious criticism of Protagoras's theory: "Can the same person know something and also not know that which he knows?" Theaetetus says this is "impossible." If "seeing is knowing," Socrates now claims, it is indeed possible to know and not know the same thing at the same time. For instance, if someone were to close one of Theaetetus's eyes, the latter would still be able to see that person's coat with the open eye, but not with the closed one. If seeing is knowing, so the argument goes, and if Theaetetus "both see[s] and do[es] not see the same thing at the same time," then he must know (through the open, seeing eye) and not know (because of the closed eye) the same thing at the same time. By overlooking the absurdity of the argument, Theaetetus admits that this "consequence contradicts" his (and Protagoras's) "thesis" (165b–c). The presumed contradiction here is that the perception theory of knowledge leads to the untenable conclusion that one knows and does not know the same thing at the same time.

Socrates makes it no secret that his last refutation is also a sophistic ambush.¹³ Once Theaetetus identifies knowledge with perception, "a mercenary skirmisher in the war of words" will ambush him and attack his theory "with a thousand such questions . . . He would make his assaults upon hearing and smelling and suchlike senses and put [Theaetetus] to confusion, sustaining his attack until" Theaetetus submits, in awe, to "his inestimable skill." "Thereupon," the sophist will hold Theaetetus "to ransom for such a sum as [he] and [the sophist] might agree upon" (165d–e). Clearly, the sophist that Socrates has in mind here is none other than Protagoras himself.¹⁴

Next, Socrates wonders "what argument Protagoras will find to defend his position. Shall we try to put it into words?" Protagoras is thus imagined to make the following objections against Socrates's arguments (all of them) against him: "Your admirable Socrates," he will say, "finds a little boy who is scared at being asked whether one and the same person can remember and at the same time not know one and the same thing. When the child is frightened into saying No, because he cannot foresee the consequence, Socrates turns the conversation so as to make a figure of fun of my unfortunate self." Since the answers the boy gave are not his own, Protagoras protests that Socrates has not really "refuted" his theory (165e–166b).

Protagoras is unaware of the trap Socrates has set for him. He falls right into it by objecting that Socrates has made a false argument against Protagoras's "unfortunate self." If Protagoras claims, as he will do so again in a moment, that "each one of us is a measure of what is and of what is not," then he should have said instead that Socrates's arguments against him are as valid and infallible as are his own arguments.

Protagoras goes on to make three claims against Socrates's objections: First, "one's present memory of a past impression is [not] an impression of the same character as one had during the original experience, which is now over." Second, no one will shrink from admitting that "it is possible for the same person to know and not to know the same thing." Third, no one will admit "that a person who is changed is the same as he was before the change occurred; or rather, that he is one person at all, and not several, indeed an infinite succession of persons, provided change goes on happening" (166b–c).

Protagoras thus proposes an extreme-flux theory with his first and third claims. As John McDowell notes, it is difficult to see how Protagoras's defense is a proper response to Socrates's objection,¹⁵ which, I claimed earlier, is fallacious in the first place. But the problem with Protagoras's speech is much graver than this, for all three claims together entail a double contradiction. He says, in effect, that the "same person" both knows and does not know the "same thing" (implied in the second claim) and that there is no such thing as the "the same person" (third claim), and no such thing as the "same thing" (first claim).

In short, Protagoras's defense is self-defeating and fallacious, which confirms to the attentive reader that falsehood is possible. Socrates has confirmed this by making fallacious arguments against Protagoras and by getting him to accuse Socrates of making such arguments against him. Then he allowed Protagoras to defend himself with a

self-destructive, *peritropè* argument.¹⁶ As I suggested in Chapter 3 many times, this sort of a refutation is to be observed in *Parmenides* also.

Socrates criticizes Protagoras's opposition to falsehood several more times in *Theaetetus*.¹⁷ I skip these criticisms and focus next on what I take to be Socrates's more substantial criticism of Protagoras.

Impossibility of Perception (Appearance)

Clearly, Protagoras has committed himself to the pure-flux theory in his last speech. Socrates is about to criticize Protagoras's commitment in a manner that closely resembles the movement from argument 7 to argument 8: if the *one* is not, and there is no abiding *being* in things, then even the appearance of things to us must be impossible.

Socrates wants to "more closely . . . study this moving reality" of Protagoras. According to Theodorus, "The followers of Heraclitus lead the quire of this persuasion with the greatest vigor." The Heracliteans are thus distinguished from the Protagoreans only by the degree of their enthusiasm for the flux theory: "Faithful to their own treatises they are literally in perpetual motion . . . ; they take very good care to leave nothing settled either in discourse or in their own minds; I suppose they think that would be something stationary—a thing they will fight against to the last and do their utmost to banish from the universe" (179c–180b). This allusion to the Heracliteans, whose teachings are the opposite of those of the Eleatic school, anticipates the fate awaiting Protagoras, who has placed himself in the same camp with them.¹⁸

However, Socrates's strategy for now is to take "a look at . . . the men of Flux." "What after all do they mean when they say all things are in change?" According to Socrates, they must think that "all things are always in every kind of change" (180e–182a). Socrates begins his criticism of the flux theory by explicitly linking it to the same theory he attributed to Protagoras earlier. (The "account," which is restated in the following sentences, was initially given at 156e.) "The account they gave of the genesis of hotness or whiteness or whatever it may be," is based on the assumption that "all things," including the perceived and perceiver, "are in a perpetual stream of change, . . . both moving in place and altering." If so, according to the "men of flux," "the very whiteness itself [constantly] flows and shifts into another color" and thus "escapes the charge of constancy in that respect" of being white—or any other quality (182a–b).

However, reasons Socrates, if we accept the theory of Protagoras and other "men of flux," we cannot give the thing we are perceiving

"the name of any color and be sure that we are naming it rightly." Theodorus agrees and adds that, on the grounds of the pure-flux theory, nothing can "be called by its right name, if, while we are speaking, [the thing we are naming] is all the time slipping away from us in this stream." Since nothing "abides" even for a moment, "then," concludes Socrates, seeing "has no right to be called seeing, any more than not-seeing, nor is any other perception entitled to be called perception rather than not-perception." In fact, we cannot even say "perception is knowledge," since we cannot even "mean knowledge any more than not-knowledge" (182b-e).

This observation is meant to contradict Protagoras's theory also. After all, he speaks of knowing, seeing, whiteness, hotness, and so on, as different things. This suggests that, according to Protagoras's theory, what "is" also *is not*; what is "altering" itself is also not altering itself. (Similar conclusions to this were drawn in argument 5, especially at 162b-e). From this follow all sorts of contradictions in the sense that what we say appears as a certain quality may appear also as its opposite (in the fashion of argument 7).

Ultimately, the pure-flux theory requires us to abandon all discourse, since even "the words 'so' and 'not so'" imply fixity. It is recommended, sarcastically, that "some new dialect will have to be instituted for the exponents of this theory, since, as it is, they have no phrases to fit their fundamental proposition" (183a-b). This argument strongly implies that the pure-flux theory cannot set any limit on things and consequently cannot account for, even as appearances, the difference, likeness, or any other quality that they may have. This lends itself to the conclusion (cf. argument 8) that if the *one* is not, then there is nothing, not even appearance.¹⁹ Thus, concludes Socrates, they cannot concede to Theodorus's "old friend" Protagoras and "admit that knowledge is perception, at least on the basis of the theory that all things are in change" (183b-c).

Middle-Period Theory Revisited

Socrates proceeds to make two final arguments against Protagoras's perception theory of knowledge. Both arguments attempt to prove that perception and knowledge are not the same. This leads to the defense of a theory that is *clearly* consistent with Plato's middle-period theory.

The gist of the first argument is that some thoughts that we have cannot be explained by perception; they are strictly induced by reflection. For instance, we are able to think that each thing is "different"

from others and “the same as itself”; “that both together are two, and each of them is one”; and that “they are unlike” or “alike each other.” To these, we may add “‘even’ and ‘odd’ and all that kind of notions [Forms?].” Theaetetus concedes that “the mind in itself is its own instrument for contemplating the common terms [such as the universal notions here enumerated] that apply to everything.” If so, concludes Socrates, “the mind contemplates some things through its own instrumentality, [and contemplates] others through the bodily faculties” (184b–185e). Here, Socrates accepts that perception is possible but points out that it is not the only means to cognition. Therefore, knowledge (broadly speaking) cannot be reduced to perception.

The second argument builds on the first. Both Socrates and Theaetetus agree that the term “*being*,”²⁰ which “belongs to everything,” should be “put . . . among the things that the mind apprehends by itself,” along with the terms “likeness and unlikeness and sameness and difference,” and with the moral terms “honorable and dishonorable . . . good and bad.” The latter are, “above all, . . . things whose being is considered, one in comparison with another, by the mind, when it reflects within itself”—that is, independently of perception (186a). Thus these things do not *appear* to us via perception. They are the objects of cognition of the mind acting independently of the senses.

However, the second argument is given a new twist, which suggests that true knowledge depends on pure reflection. Without sufficient argumentation, it is concluded that it is “impossible” to “reach truth when one cannot reach [*being*].” It is rather clear here that Socrates thinks truth comes from the apprehension of the *being* of things. If grasping the “truth of a thing” depends on grasping its *being*, and if this purely mental grasping amounts to knowledge, then it follows that “knowledge does not reside in the [perceived] impressions but in our reflection upon them. It is there, seemingly, and not in the impressions, that it is possible to grasp [*being*] and truth.” In short, “perception and knowledge cannot possibly be the same thing.” Thus they “must not look for [knowledge] in sense-perception at all” (186b–187b).

As David Bostock puts it, “it is clear” from Socrates’s conclusion that “perception *never* ‘attains being,’ and so *never* ‘attains truth,’ and hence *never* is knowledge.”²¹ I think, given the evidence just presented, Bostock’s interpretation is correct, though it must be qualified. Socrates accepts that perception can lead to some sort of “knowledge,” provided that what we perceive is not in extreme flux. If so, Socrates must be denying to perception the kind of knowledge we obtain from pure reflection, the object of which is the *being* of

each thing. The problem is that *Theaetetus* does little to clarify different senses of cognition, which, for instance, Socrates does in *Republic*.

Still, Socrates's argument here warns us not to swing in John McDowell's direction. The latter rightly points out that Socrates admits the possibility of perception-based cognition of sorts, but (I think) he goes too far in suggesting that what Socrates has argued here cannot be squared with Plato's TF.²² Socrates's last argument is indeed remarkably consistent with the middle-period TF.²³ There is no evidence in *Theaetetus* to support the conclusion that Plato here has given up on the middle-period TF, even though he is not making an elaborate case for it in this dialogue.²⁴

This conclusion becomes even more plausible if we consider Socrates's *digression* in the middle of *Theaetetus*. Here, Socrates proposes to "describe the philosophic quire," to which he belongs. This quire is led by "the leaders in philosophy," who have little interest in bodily pleasures and worldly affairs. They are "as Pindar says, 'beyond the sky, beneath the earth,' searching the heavens and measuring the plains, everywhere seeking the true nature of everything, . . . never sinking to what lies close at hand." These philosophers spend "all" their "pains on the question, what man is, and what powers and properties distinguish such a nature [or essence] from any other." They also reflect on such things as "justice and injustice in themselves" (173b–175c). As I read it, the philosophical account of, say, "man" ultimately depends on knowing "what man [truly] is" or on grasping "justice" in itself. It is only with such an orientation toward these, and not with perceiving "what lies close at hand," that we can grasp the truth of the thing in question. The life and the interests of the true philosophers Socrates describes here are consistent with the middle-period dialogues.²⁵ Also, it is very likely that Socrates here has in mind Forms as the objects of the philosophers' intellectual interests. To put this more safely, the *digression* is in line with the middle-period TF.

Conclusion of *Theaetetus*

The remaining portion of *Theaetetus* deals with two additional theories, or definitions, of knowledge. Since these sections have almost no bearing on *Parmenides*, I will jump to the final conclusion of this dialogue: "neither perception, nor true belief, nor the addition of an 'account' to true belief can be knowledge." All these theories, which have been delivered with Socrates's "midwife's skill" are "mere wind-eggs and not worth the rearing." This clearly means that none of the three theories discussed in *Theaetetus* are worth pursuing. Socrates

encourages Theaetetus to keep on trying, but without relying on these “wind-eggs.” What Theaetetus has gained from this discussion is precisely that he should avoid these views. At his moment, Socrates has to go to “the portico of the King Archon to meet the indictment which Meletus has drawn up against [him].” Before leaving the scene, he requests to meet with his present company again the next day (210a–d). What happens the next day is the subject matter of *Sophist*.

PARMENIDES AND PARMENIDES IN *SOPHIST*

Socrates's Reception of the Stranger from Elea

Accordingly, *Sophist* opens with Theodorus's following statement: “here we are, Socrates, faithful to our appointment of yesterday, and, what is more, we have brought a guest with us. Our friend here is a native of Elea; he belongs to the school of Parmenides and Zeno, and is devoted to philosophy.” Due to his association with “the school of Parmenides and Zeno,” Socrates initially responds to Theodorus by saying that the guest “may be one of those higher powers, who intends to observe and expose our weaknesses in philosophical discourse, like a very spirit of refutation,” implying that, like Parmenides and Zeno, he might be a sophist. Theodorus assures Socrates that “he is more reasonable than the devotees of verbal dispute” (216a–b).

However, after making the aforementioned association, Socrates also says he had once witnessed Parmenides give “some magnificent arguments” (217c). This is possibly a reference to *Parmenides*. If my reading of that dialogue is correct, Plato is being sarcastic here. Moreover, the Stranger's criticism of Parmenides in *Sophist* leaves little doubt of his sarcasm. The Stranger (on Plato's behalf) will tell us in no uncertain terms that Parmenides's doctrine is self-contradictory. The all-around criticism of Parmenides in *Sophist* indicates that Plato was not at all impressed with Parmenides. Importantly for our purposes, this criticism shows not only that arguments 1, 2, and 6 are attributed to Parmenides in *Parmenides* but also that Plato does not own any of them.

Sophist as Producer and Trader of Falsehoods

The general question Socrates wants the Stranger to answer is whether or not his “countrymen” think the sophist, statesman, and philosopher belong to a “single type” (217a). The definition of the statesman is taken up in *Statesman*. Some scholars believe that the philosopher

is defined in *Sophist*; others think Plato intended to write a separate dialogue for that purpose.

By using the method of division and combination, the Stranger initially comes up with six definitions of the sophist, which are all derived from various professions (arts). The sophist is someone who is (1) "the hired hunter of rich young men," (2) "a sort of merchant of learning for the nourishment for the soul," (3) "a retail dealer in the same wares," (4) a seller of the "products of his own manufacture," (5) an "eristic" debater, and (6) a *possible* (the Stranger reluctantly accepts this) "purifier of the soul from conceits that block the way to understanding" (231d–e).²⁶

The manifold appearance of the sophist begs two questions. First, is there a single "feature . . . in which all these forms [types] of skill converge"? The initial answer to this question is that the sophist is essentially a "controversialist," or an "instructor in controversy." Sophists use this skill to "create a belief in the minds of young men that [sophists] are the wisest men on all subjects." (Protagoras is explicitly mentioned here.) However, hence the second question, is it really possible for the sophist to be "wise on all subjects"? Since this is deemed impossible, the knowledge the sophist claims to possess cannot be real knowledge. What sophists actually produce are "imitations," or "illusions," in the "region of discourse." He is thus "a sort of wizard, an imitator of real things" (232a–234d). This argument is not very compelling. However, it sets up one of the key questions of *Sophist*: is imitation possible?

It is not yet clear what kind of imitation the sophist produces and trades. The Stranger identifies two types of imitation, which are "creating likenesses" and "semblances." The former refers to creating "a copy" of the original, but not the original itself. We may suppose that this form of imitation resembles the art of a craftsman, who makes beds, but not the Bed itself (cf. *Republic*). Semblance-making is ambiguously defined as making what "appears" to be likeness but "really is not so" (234e–236c).

However, the Stranger too readily equates these terms with falsehood. The sophist is an image maker in the field of discourse and thus engages in the production of falsehoods. Falsehood is generally, and ambiguously, defined in *Sophist* as saying what *is not* about *what is*, and vice versa, which somehow parallels making a copy of, or imitating, a real thing. The Stranger's ultimate aim is to expose sophists as imitators and producers of falsehood. In order to do this, the Stranger has to prove that falsehood is possible.

According to the Stranger, the problem is that “it is extremely hard . . . to find correct terms in which one may say or think that falsehoods have real existence [or *being*], without being caught in a contradiction by the mere utterance of such words.” The sophist takes “refuge” in this extremely hard area of investigation, waiting to ambush anyone who says falsehood is possible. “The audacity of the statement [i.e., that *falsehood exists*] lies in its implication that ‘what is not’ has being, for in no other way could a falsehood come to have being” (236c–237a). For the Eleatic Stranger, the statement “falsehood exists” is audacious precisely because it goes against Parmenides’s “pronouncement” to the effect that *what is not* does not have any *being*.

Parmenides’s “Pronouncement”

Parmenides’s pronouncement (prohibition) is presented in a convoluted manner in which two different types of prohibition are conflated (a similar conflation exists in argument 6). First, the Stranger says that “the great Parmenides from beginning to end testified against” the claim that “‘what is not’ has being.” As Parmenides says in his poem, “Never shall this be proved—that things that are not are, but do thou, in thy inquiry, hold back thy thought from this way” (237a–b). Here, Parmenides testifies against attributing *being* to not-*being*, *is* to *is not*. As we will discover later, the reverse—attributing not-*being* to *being*—is also prohibited.

However, when the Stranger wants to submit Parmenides’s aforementioned pronouncement to “a mild degree of torture,” he shifts to the evaluation of another kind of prohibition, which prohibits us from speaking of (or conceptualizing) *what is not* just by itself. Yet, in spite of Parmenides’s prohibition, “we do not hesitate to utter the phrase ‘that which has no sort of being’” (237b). Instead of pursuing this interesting paradox, the Stranger shifts back to the mixed types of prohibition, as stated in the previous paragraph.

Repeating the prohibition, the Stranger says next that “the term ‘what is not’ must not be applied to anything that exists [or *is*].” The Stranger adds that since *what is not* cannot be applied to anything that *is*, and since *what is* must always be “something,” we also (according to Parmenides) must not apply *what is not* to the term “something.” From this dictum, it follows “necessarily that to speak of what is not ‘something’ is to speak of nothing at all” (237b–e).

This is a faulty conclusion, which Plato cannot accept. It supposes the equivalence of *is not* and *is absolutely nothing*. (The fictional

Parmenides made the same fallacious conflation at the threshold of argument 6.) When this sort of negative predication happens, suggests the Stranger, a person is not “saying anything” at all; he or she is “speaking of nothing” but meaningless “sounds.”²⁷ Theaetetus, the Stranger’s respondent, points out that what the Stranger has just said “brings the argument to the last pitch of perplexity” (237e). What he means is that “speaking of what is not” leads to utter confusion and thus agrees with the Parmenidean position the Stranger has just presented.

The Stranger thinks Theaetetus’s agreement is premature: “no time for boasting yet,” he says. In his attempt to explain the problem at hand, the Stranger reverses the ordering of the prohibition once again. He next considers whether *what is* can be attributed to *what is not*. For instance, we assume that “number must exist.” According to the current version of the prohibition, “we must not attach either plurality or unity in number” to “that which is not.” However, inevitably “when we speak of ‘*that which is not*,’” and “of ‘*things that are not*,’” we attribute “unity” and “plurality” to *what is not*. “Yet,” the Stranger points out, “we [Parmenideans] admit that it is not justifiable or correct to set about attaching something that [*is*] to [*what is not*]” (238a–c). This amounts to an admission of contradiction in Parmenides’s pronouncement.

What the Stranger says next does not exactly follow from the conclusion he has just reached: “you see the inference then: one cannot legitimately utter the words, or speak or think of that which just simply is not; it is unthinkable, not to be spoken of or uttered or expressed” (238c). This “inference” seems to repeat Parmenides’s prohibition against thinking or speaking of *is not* just by itself, whereas the Stranger has been discussing the mixed type of prohibition—namely, attributing *is* to *what is not*. Also, the inference gives the wrong impression that the Stranger flatly accepts Parmenides’s pronouncement, whereas his ultimate mission here is to problematize it.

The Stranger thus says, “I who laid it down that the nonexistent [*that which is not*] could have neither unity nor plurality, have not only just now but also at this very moment spoken of it as one thing, for I am saying ‘*the nonexistent*.’” This means that, against the prohibition, he has just attributed number (one, or unity) to *what is not*. Also, “a little while ago I was speaking of its *being* a thing not to be uttered or spoken of or expressed.” In applying the term “being” to *what is not*, the Stranger admits that he “was contradicting” himself. The contradiction is that, if we abide by Parmenides’s prohibition, “we ought not to specify [*what is not*] as one thing or many or even to

call it 'it' at all." Yet "we" have been able to speak of it as such. The Stranger admits total "defeat." He cannot find "the correct way of describing the nonexistent [*what is not*]" without "attributing being or unity or plurality" to it; nor has he been able to refute *what is not*, for he has been able to attribute *what is* to it (238d–239c).

The ambivalence in his arguments has led some able scholars to assume that the Stranger (and Plato) agrees with Parmenides's pronouncement.²⁸ Others, equally able, hold the opposite view,²⁹ with which I agree. However, Plato is also to be blamed for the ambivalence, for he has not been sufficiently clear on the nature of the problem at hand. He has allowed the Stranger to reduce the problem to whether or not we can speak of simply *what is not*. Clearly, the verdict is that we can, and have been, but not without attributing *being* to it. This verdict itself constitutes an unresolvable paradox: we cannot say that we cannot speak of *what is not*, for saying this amounts to actually speaking of it. However, speaking of it amounts to not speaking of it as such, for we add *being* to *what is not* when we speak of it. Cornford, who wrongly insists that Plato is agreeing with Parmenides in this context, nevertheless winds up catching a glimpse of the paradox. He says Parmenides had "no right . . . to make even negative statements about [*what is not*] or utter the unutterable."³⁰

However, as we have seen, Parmenides's pronouncement also prohibits any combination of *what is (being)* and *what is not (not-being)*: "for this shall never be proved, that the things that are not are; and do thou restrain thy thought from this way of inquiry." What the Stranger quotes here (from fragment VII) is also repeated in the other fragment of Parmenides's poem. *Being*, he says, must either be "altogether" or not be "at all." Then he asks, "Is it or is it not?" and instructs us "to set aside the one way [the way of *is not*] as unthinkable and nameless (for it is no true way), and that the other path is real and true" (VIII.11–12; VIII.16–19). In this fragment, Parmenides also prohibits attributing *is not* to *what is*. For this reason, the Stranger's present focus on the mixed prohibition to refute Parmenides's pronouncement is justified.³¹

Accordingly, the Stranger admits that he cannot simultaneously remain loyal to Parmenides and say the sophist "possesses an art of creating 'semblances,'" or "images." If he says this, the sophist will ask what he means by "images" and "semblances." It is noted that defining all kinds of images (reflections "in water or in mirrors," the products of a sculptor, and so on) requires identifying their "common character." This character is a combination of "real and unreal" (*being* and not-*being*). What is meant is that an image is like the original, but

is not the original itself. In this sense, it both *is* and *is not*. Presumably, this definition of images justifies the following definition of falsehood: a "false statement" amounts either to "stating that things that are, are not" or to stating "that things that are not, are." Thus, since images indeed exist, we must admit "against our [Parmenidean] will . . . that 'what is not' has some sort of being" (239d–240e).

Yet again, however, if we stay within the parameters of the Parmenidean doctrine, the sophist will point out that we are contradicting ourselves when we utter the definition of false statement. "He will say" our definition attributes "what has being to what is not," and vice versa. In agreement with Parmenides, it was concluded earlier (238a, 238e) that "this [attribution] was altogether impossible." (It becomes very clear here that Plato thinks Parmenides's pronouncement also prohibits combining *being* and not-*being* and that this is the problem he now wants to tackle.) Thus we cannot simultaneously say "falsehoods exist" and accept Parmenides's pronouncement. If we do this, we will deserve the sophist's "counterattacks" (241b).

The proper defense against the "counterattacks" requires challenging Parmenides and thus running the risk of becoming "a sort of parricide." In other words, the Stranger finds it "necessary in self-defense to put to the question that pronouncement of father Parmenides, and establish by main force that what is not, in some respect has being, and conversely that what is, in a way is not." Thus he "must now dare to lay unfilial hands on that pronouncement [of Parmenides]." The Stranger reluctantly and cautiously says that he will "attempt to refute the pronouncement" (241d–242b).

The overlap between argument 6 and the Stranger's intended refutation of Parmenides's pronouncement becomes rather obvious when we note that the fictional Parmenides is also made to say the following in argument 6: nothing that *is* can belong to *what is not*; nor can *what is not* be "this," or "that," or "other" in character. Thus we cannot say that it is "something." To have these or other attributes would imply that *what is not* "partakes of being" (163e–164b). Given the Stranger's intended criticism of this very prohibition, it is evident that Plato meant argument 6 to be a problematic Parmenidean argument and not something with which Plato himself agrees.

Refutation of Parmenides's Confused Monism

However, the detailed refutation of the pronouncement is postponed. The Stranger first wants to question "Parmenides and everyone else" on a different subject. More specifically, he wants to question the

attempts of all philosophical schools “to determine how many real things there are and what they are like” (242c). In this section, I focus on the Stranger’s refutation of Parmenides in this regard. This refutation illustrates the contradictions entailed in the historical Parmenides’s supposition and coincides with the earlier portions of *Parmenides*, argument 2.³²

Parmenides claims to be monist but defines his *one* in a manner that contradicts his monism. In other words, the Eleatic school unfolds “its tale on the assumption that what we call ‘all things’ are only one thing.” The Eleatics thus oppose the existence of plurality, arguing that “all is one” and that this *one* is “the reality [or *Being*]” (242d–244b). The Stranger intends to show how the claim leads to all sorts of “absurdities.” Indeed, saying that “all” is only “one” is already self-contradictory.

Parmenides argues that “there is only one thing, . . . to which [he] gives the name *real* [*being*].” Is the *being* the same thing that Parmenides “give[s] the name *one*”? Is he indeed “applying two names to the same thing”? Parmenides, without becoming “absurd,” cannot simultaneously hold onto his “fundamental assertion”—namely, that “there is only one thing,” or *only the one is*—and say that the *one* has two names. To recall, Parmenides in his poem opposes giving plural names to *Being* (VII.55–59). He also applies the name “whole” (VIII.38) to his “one thing” but says “whole” does not admit of plurality. In order to show the contradiction entailed in this statement, the Stranger quotes an already familiar passage from Parmenides’s poem, which says, “Every way like the mass of a well-rounded sphere, evenly balanced from the midst in every direction, for there must not be something more nor something less here than there.” The Stranger concludes that “if the real is like” the way Parmenides describes it in his poem—that is, if it is a sphere-like limited whole—it must “have a middle and extremities, and consequently it must have parts” (244b–c).

As if to remind us of argument 2, the Stranger adds that if the Parmenidean whole is one with parts, “there is nothing against its having the property of unity as applied to the aggregate of all the parts and being that way . . . a sum or whole.” If so, his *one* cannot be “just unity itself.” “Surely,” adds the Stranger, “unity in the true sense and rightly defined must be altogether without parts.” Parmenides’s whole “will not answer to that definition” of Unity because it necessarily has parts within itself (245a–b).

Thus Parmenides is faced with a *dilemma*: either (1) “the real one,” understood as a whole with parts, *has* the “property of unity,” or (2)

“the real is not a whole at all.” The Stranger’s murky explanation of the dilemma at 245b–d has generated some scholarly controversy.³³ What is clear about the explanation, as Cornford points out, is that Plato here is “concerned to show the defects of Parmenides’ position from his own standpoint.”³⁴ The Stranger’s final statement on this issue justifies Cornford’s point: the Parmenidean doctrine, says the Stranger, leads to “countless . . . difficulties, each involved in measureless perplexity” (245d–e).

Argument 2 playfully exaggerates this “measureless perplexity” with sophistical fallacies. Let us recall that H2, as opposed to H1, is not simply “one.” The fictional Parmenides clarifies that the new supposition considers both the *one* and *is*, and “this implies that ‘is’ and ‘one’ stand for different things.” It is settled immediately that the supposition implies that “one is such as to have parts” and must be a whole for this reason (*Parmenides*, 142b–d). Argument 2 develops on the basis of this implication up to a point and then turns into a barrage of sophisms. Then *Sophist* basically tells us that argument 2 exercises the self-contradictory nature of Parmenides’s doctrine.

Is it possible that argument 2 also proposes a new Platonic TF, as some scholars claim it does? I have argued that argument 2 does nothing of the sort. The counterargument found in the literature is that *Sophist* gives us a new theory, which treats Forms as wholes with parts. The Stranger’s definition of Unity in the preceding discussion already refutes this counterargument. As I argue later on in this chapter, the Stranger’s theory—how Forms (or kinds) can be combined—also does not endorse the view that Forms in *Sophist* become wholes with parts. There is yet one more issue that pertains to the debates we have been having on the fate of the TF. It is often asserted that Plato, by criticizing the “friends of forms,” launches another attack against the middle-period TF in *Sophist*. I intend to show in the next section that this is a false assertion.

Refutation of the Friends of Forms

The Stranger proceeds to refute two other schools of thought, which belong to the earthbound Giants (materialists) and the heavenly Gods (idealists). In this section, I will only give a very brief summary of the refutation of the materialists and focus mostly on the refutation of the theory the Stranger attributes to the “friends of forms” (henceforth “Friends”) who are included among the Gods. The theory the Stranger attributes to Friends calls to mind argument 4.

The materialists argue that “real existence belongs only to that which can be handled and offers resistance to touch. They define reality as the same thing as body” and deny that anything else is real, or has *being* (246a–b). However, the reformed materialists (the unreformed ones are not capable of reasoning and discourse) would agree that there is such a thing as a “mortal living creature,” which is “animated by soul.” Thus they must take the “soul to be something real.” They also admit that “one soul may be just, another unjust, or one wise, another foolish.” This necessitates the conclusion that these bodiless attributes, which participate in the soul, must also be real. It suffices for the Stranger’s purposes that the reformed materialists “consent to admit that even a small part of reality is bodiless” (246e–247d). This admission is enough to show that there is more to the entire cosmic reality than the physical, sensible bodies.

The question now becomes, what do these two kinds of reality, bodily and bodiless, have in common? “Power” is abruptly declared “the mark,” or “common character,” of anything “that has real being.” Power is defined as the capacity either to “affect anything else or to be affected.” The Stranger goes further and merely asserts that “real things . . . are nothing but power.” Theaetetus speculates that the materialists would accept this “description” of the real. However, the Stranger does not commit to it yet: “they and we may change our minds” later (247d–248a). He will only use this definition of power against the theory of Friends in a rather confusing manner.³⁵

Friends, on the other hand, place “true reality” in the “heights of the unseen,” and maintain “that true reality consists in certain intelligible and bodiless forms.” They “shatter and pulverize those bodies which their opponents wield” and call them “not real being, but a sort of moving process of becoming” (246b–c). Moreover, Friends “make a distinction between ‘becoming’ and ‘real being’ [i.e., Forms] and speak of them as separate” (248a).

According to Cornford, “The theory of the Friends is the theory stated in the *Phaedo* and [subsequently] criticized in the *Parmenides*.” Cornford reasons that in these two dialogues, and in the previous description of the theory of Friends, “the emphasis falls upon the separation of the Ideal world from the many changing things of sense.” This separation, argues Cornford, is assumed to be “complete.” It is also assumed that Forms never change, and the changing things “never remain the same.” Many scholars agree with Cornford on this issue.³⁶ I do not.

First, Plato never argues that the world of becoming “never remains the same” *at all*.³⁷ Relatedly, it is misleading to suggest that Plato

thought the sensible world of becoming was utterly unreal. Again, relatedly, it is wrong to say that Plato proposes the “complete” separation of Forms from the world of becoming. Even the passage from *Parmenides* (130b), which Cornford uses to justify his claim, explicitly acknowledges the participation of Forms in other things. Yet scholars keep referring to Plato’s “radical separation” of Forms and to his participation theory as if these theories were unrelated or belonged to two different Platos.³⁸

Friends also say that “we have intercourse with becoming by means of the body through senses, whereas we have intercourse with . . . [Forms] by means of the soul through reflection.” Yet they maintain that “the real being is always in the same unchanging state, whereas becoming is variable.” The “intercourse” argument suggests the power theory discussed earlier. The theory is restated as follows: “we proposed as a sufficient mark of real things the presence in a thing of the power of acting upon or of acting in relation to [another] thing” (248a–c). These lines give the impression that the Stranger wants to assail Friends for not accepting the fact that Forms change by being known or acted upon. However, he does not go so far as to make this absurd argument. Indeed, he cannot make this argument, for he is about to accept that the whole of reality (i.e., the whole cosmos) includes the unchangeable along with the world of becoming.

The Stranger first says Friends do not accept the power theory he devised in agreement with the materialists. They argue that “a power of acting and being acted upon belong to becoming, but neither of these powers is compatible with the real thing” (248c). The Stranger then asks Theaetetus, who is supposed to answer on their behalf, whether Friends would agree with the argument the Stranger just attributed to them: “well, do you agree that knowing and being known is an action, or is it experiencing an effect, or both?” According to Theaetetus, Friends would say “neither; otherwise [they] would be contradicting what they said earlier.” The Stranger reiterates the rationale behind the answer just attributed to Friends: “they” would say that “if knowing is to be acting on something, it follows that what is known must be acted upon by it, and so, on that showing, reality when it is being known by the act of knowledge must, in so far as it is known, be changed owing to being so acted upon—and that, we [i.e., Friends] say, cannot happen to the changeless” (248d–e).

It is clear that Friends think Forms do not change by being known. Is the Stranger himself arguing that Forms change by being known?³⁹ He has not yet said Forms change by being known. The Stranger argues instead that the soul is real and that *it* changes. In response to

Friends' answer, he urges that "change, life, soul, [and] understanding [must] have . . . place in that which is perfectly real," which cannot stand "immutable in solemn aloofness, devoid of intelligence." If the "perfectly real" entails intelligence, then it must also "have life." If "it contains both" intelligence and life, then it "must have soul" in which intelligence and life "reside." Notice that the soul is placed within the "perfectly real," and intelligence and life within the soul. It follows from this premise that the "perfectly real" must be a "living thing" and thus cannot be "in complete changelessness." If so, "we must admit that what changes and change itself are real things" (249a-b).

As it turns out, the "perfectly real" universe includes both the changeable and the unchangeable. On the one hand, "if all things are unchangeable, no intelligence can really exist anywhere with regard to any object." This conclusion depends on the premise that the soul, as a living, acting thing, is necessary for having intelligence (knowledge). On the other hand, "if all things are [merely] moving and changing," then there cannot be any knowledge and intelligence. In other words, if nothing "abides constant in the same condition and in the same respect," if "such objects" do not exist anywhere, it would equally be "impossible" to have any knowledge (249b-249c). This argument against Friends is entirely in line with Plato's middle-period views.

"On these grounds," adds the Stranger, "it seems that only one course is open to the philosopher who values knowledge and the rest above all else. He must refuse to accept from the champions either of the one [Parmenides] or of the many forms [Friends] the doctrine that all reality is changeless, and must turn a deaf ear to the other party who represent reality as everywhere changing. Like a child begging for 'both,' he must declare that reality or the sum of things is both at once—all that is unchangeable and all that is in change" (249c-d). The Stranger's current proposal is also in agreement with the middle-period theory. To say the least, it does not controvert it in any way.⁴⁰

Against Friends and others, the Stranger is about to propose the combination theory of Forms.⁴¹ He begins with the following question: "how it is that we call the same thing . . . by several names?" For example, "when we speak of a man we give him many additional names—we attribute to him colors and shapes and sizes and defects and good qualities." In short, "we take any given thing as one and yet speak of it as many and by many names" (251a-b).

The Stranger points out that this argument about the combination of names, which presupposes the combination of one and many, only provides "a magnificent entertainment for the young and for some of their elders who have taken to learning later in life." He

thus postpones the formulation of his combination theory and once again directs his attention to criticizing the other schools of thought. The problem identified here calls to mind Socrates's argument in *Parmenides*: sensible things, such as persons, sticks, and stones, are obviously one and many. However, the Stranger here mainly targets those who forbid "us to speak of a man as 'good.'" According to this prohibitive view, "we must only speak of the good as good, and of the man as man" (251b–c). Clearly, the Stranger is targeting those who deny any form of predication, except for self-identity.⁴² Highly likely, he has in mind some of the Megarics.⁴³ As we know, Plato satirizes this view in *Euthydemus*, which has Eleatic origins, for it depends on denying the plurality of names applicable to one thing and the plural application of one name to many things.

In a nutshell, the Stranger's counterargument is that names can be combined. He wants his counterargument "to be addressed to all [philosophical schools] alike who have ever had anything to say about [*being*]." These include "all those others whom we have been conversing with earlier." They are all accused of saying, "Nothing has any capacity for combination with anything else for any purpose." The "admission" that the combination of names is possible, suggests the Stranger, "seems to make short work of all theories; it upsets at one blow those who have a universe in motion, and those who make it motionless unity, and all who say their realities exist in forms that are always the same in all respects." The "admission" also makes short work of the theories of "those who make all things come together at one time and separate at another." Regardless of "whether they suppose this to happen in alteration or to be going on all the time," what they are arguing "would be meaningless if there is no blending at all." However, "the greatest absurdity of all results from pursuing the theory of those very people [Megarics] who will not allow one thing to share in the quality of another and so be called by its name." These figures self-refute every time they speak, for they cannot refrain from "connecting" different names in "their statements" (251c–252c).

The Stranger's wholesale disparagement of all these theories is hard to justify. More intriguing in this context is the inclusion of the theory of Friends among those who deny "any capacity for combination with anything else for any purpose." If there ever were such Friends who made this claim, the earlier Plato most certainly was not one of them.⁴⁴ Plato does not anywhere prohibit us from saying that a man is good, bad, just, unjust, tall, short, beautiful, and so on. He says in *Phaedo* that a beautiful thing is beautiful because it partakes of the Form of Beauty or because of "the presence" of the Form of Beauty in that beautiful

object (100b–d). In the same dialogue, he also explains how, because of the participation of different Forms in the same object, we come to call the same thing, for instance snow, both “cold” and “snow” or a number both “three” and “odd,” and so on (102d–103d). *Republic* informs us that Forms are “everywhere in association with actions, bodies, and one another” (476a). In *Parmenides*, Socrates speaks of opposite Forms (e.g., Likeness and Unlikeness, Unity and Plurality) participating in the same body (128e–129e).

In short, it cannot be argued that the earlier Plato ever denied “any capacity for combination” of anything “with anything else for any purpose.” If Friends, whoever they were, had agreed with this denial, then certainly the earlier Plato could not have been one of them. There were certainly other theories of Forms besides Plato’s, and Aristotle gives us enough reason to think that some of these theories coincided with the theory of Friends.⁴⁵

An Analogous Model for the Blending Theory

Actually, we have no indication in the text thus far that the Stranger intends to propose a way to combine Forms. All we have been told is that things, especially names, are combinable. Relatedly, what he tries to combine in the following discussion is not always very clear. With this proviso in mind, I will assume that he is leading us toward a combination theory of Forms.

At first, the Stranger provides an analogous prototype from the combination of other things to illustrate his point. For instance, Forms, or names, combine in the “same” way as do “the letters of the alphabet.” The alphabet analogy reveals that there are special kinds of letters—that is, vowels—which are necessary to “bond” the consonants together. If the analogy is apt, he reasons, there must be special Forms that serve this necessary purpose of bonding different Forms together (252d–253a).

The blending, or combination, theory, then, is essentially a theory of bonding. To be sure, the Stranger cannot be saying that each letter is a divisible, composite entity. For instance, he cannot be saying here that the letter *α* entails within itself all the other letters or the meaning of a word that this letter helps piece together.⁴⁶ The elements, then, are not taken to be divisible wholes. What is divisible in the present case is a word, or a syllable, which is a whole in which these letters are combined. Analogously, this theory applies to Forms as well.

The Stranger repeats for the second time that the analogy drawn from the art of combining letters applies directly to “kinds,” a term he

uses interchangeably (and unclearly) with Forms.⁴⁷ "We have agreed," he says, "that the kinds stand toward one another in the same way" as letters. Moreover, like any other field of knowledge, we need to have the appropriate art and the right expert to show us "which kinds are consonant [harmonize], and which are incompatible with one another"; to show which kinds "pervade" other kinds "and connect them so that they can blend"; and to point out "whether there are certain [kinds] that traverse wholes" and make possible their "division" (253b–d). Again, since this analogy is taken as a prototype for the combination of Forms, the "wholes" cannot be a reference to Forms or kinds, but to anything (such as a statement) in which Forms are brought together in a meaningful manner.

The art ("science") capable of combining and dividing Forms is "dialectic," and the expert of this art is "the philosopher." "The business of the science of dialectic" is to divide "according to kinds, not taking the same form for a different one or a different one for the same." This statement implies that Forms are unique and that their proper division involves knowing how to distinguish them from each other. What the Stranger says next is very difficult to understand: the "man" who practices the art of dialectic "discerns clearly *one* form everywhere extended throughout many, where each one lies apart, and *many* forms, different from one another, embraced from without by one form, and again *one* form connected in a unity through many wholes, and *many* forms, entirely marked off apart" (253d–e). Some think this passage is impenetrable.⁴⁸ Others think, with some validity, that it is a summary of different aspects of the combination theory the Stranger defends, which are outlined in the paragraphs that follow.⁴⁹ Consistently with this latter view, I suggest that the Stranger is here repeating what he has told us at 253b–d, as quoted in the previous paragraph. For now, the Stranger opts for a simpler clarification of what he means: "that means knowing how to distinguish, kind by kind, in what way the several kinds can or cannot combine" (253d).

Meanwhile, we are told that the philosopher, who has "the mastery of dialectic, is the pure and rightful lover of wisdom." His "thoughts dwell upon the nature of reality." He "is difficult to see because his region is so bright, for the eye of the vulgar soul cannot endure to keep its gaze fixed on the divine" (253e–254b). It is as if the Stranger is here copying a line from the middle-period dialogues, especially from *Phaedrus* (247b–c). The sophist, on the other hand, "takes refuge in the darkness of not-being" (*Sophist*, 254a). He is equally difficult to see, unless we find a way to explain what "not-being" entails or, *contra* Parmenides, that not-*being* even could be thought or spoken of.

This comment about the dark hiding place of the sophist is rather obscure. It seems to equate “not-being” with falsehood, or imitation, which the sophist produces and trades as if it were the genuine article. However, the Stranger will proceed to treat not-*being* both as a Form (Difference, equated with not-*Being*) and as a real *instance* of Difference, ontologically *en par* with *Being* and *being*. If so, he has no right to claim here that “not-being” is the dark realm of deception, or falsehood, in which the sophist “takes refuge.” This problem will show up again later on in the dialogue, though I do not anticipate a satisfactory relief from it.

Leaving these extra complications aside, the Stranger has told us here that the correct combination of letters is a proper model for the combination of Forms.

Blending and Division of Forms: Toward the Discovery of Not-*Being*

The Stranger and Theaetetus have already agreed “that some of the kinds” (contrary kinds) do not combine, or associate, “some combine to a small extent, others with a large number, while some pervade all [kinds],” meaning that “there is nothing against their” association with all the rest. Only five important “forms” will be considered. The goal is to examine their natures, see which ones combine, and in what ways. Again, the ultimate goal is to account for *being* and not-*being* as clearly as possible (“perfect clearness” is not promised!) and see if they could establish whether “what is not [not-*being*] *really* is” and whether it combines with *being* (254b–d). If this can be done, then the Stranger will be able to declare victory against Parmenides’s pronouncement and rightfully accuse the sophist of dealing with falsehoods.

The Stranger first considers three Forms. Two of them are Rest and Motion, and the third is translated as Existence (e.g., Cornford’s and Sayre’s translations), that which *is* (e.g., White’s translation), or *Being* (e.g., Fowler’s and numerous others’ translations). I prefer *Being*, though this preference does not decisively alter the structure of the Stranger’s argument. The other two Forms are Sameness and Difference (or, Otherness). To begin with, Motion and Rest are examples of two contrary Forms; they will never blend. *Being*, on the other hand, “can be blended with both” Motion and Rest. Thus we can say Motion *is*, or Rest *is*, but we cannot say Motion *is* Rest (254d). We must assume that the Stranger is not discussing sensible objects here.

In other words, he is not saying that a sensible thing cannot be in motion and at rest at the same time.

This seemingly straightforward explanation begs many questions, which are not clearly answered in the text.⁵⁰ For instance, does Motion blend with *being* or *Being*, and how does this blending (predication) modify Motion, if it modifies it at all? Motion *is* cannot mean Motion is identical with *Being*. The Stranger probably means either that Motion exists or that it is self-identical (both meanings pop up in what follows). If so, then it is not *Being*, as such, which blends with Motion, but rather *being*—that is, an instance of *Being*. There is simply no possible case in which *Being* could be attached to another thing as its predicate and remain a Form, be that thing a Form or not; nor can *Being* bond (combine, connect, predicate) multiple things and still remain a Form. Let us take two bondable Forms for the sake of illustration: Man and Tallness. Clearly, the *is* in the statement “This man *is* tall” cannot be the Form of *Being*. Moreover, in this example, neither the subject nor the predicate can meaningfully remain a Form. This is to say, it would be absurd to say that the Form of Man *is* the Form of Tallness, as it would be equally absurd to say that a man is the Form of Tallness or the Form of Man is tall. Of course, the Stranger does not say any of these, nor does he clarify that he does not. His presentation of the Form blending theory obscures the fact that the vowel-like Forms do not blend other things in their capacity as Forms, and the fact that, in some cases (properly speaking, always), no term of a statement remains a Form. In short, if he has something meaningful to say, he cannot always be blending Forms *qua* Forms with other Forms *qua* Forms. To repeat, we cannot say Motion is *Being*, Motion is Sameness, Motion is Difference, or any other possible combination of these Forms. Indeed, we can only blend multiple Forms negatively (or positively by saying they are different), though the bonding term cannot be a Form. For instance, we may meaningfully say Motion *is not* (or is different from) Rest, Sameness, Difference, and so on.

According to the Stranger, each single Form (Motion, Rest, or *Being*) is “*different* from the other two, and the *same* as itself.” What needs to be shown first is that both Difference and Sameness are “distinct from” these three Forms. Somehow, establishing them as distinct entities suffices to show that they are indeed Forms. For instance *Being* (B) is necessarily different from both Rest (R) and Motion (M). Otherwise, if *Being* were identical (=) to Motion and Rest (i.e., if $M = B$ and $R = B$), then when we say Rest *is* ($R = B$), we say, in effect, Rest *is* Motion ($R = M$), which is impossible since these are uncombinable contraries. (Notice that we replaced *Being* with *is*—*being*—in

establishing the impossible combination.) In short, if $M = B$ and $B = R$, then $R = M$, and this is impossible. The Stranger uses the same reasoning to argue that Sameness (S) and Difference (D) are also distinct from Motion and Rest. If $M = D$ and $R = D$, then $R = M$, which again is impossible. If $M = S$ and $R = S$, then $R = M$ —another impossibility. (Again, none of these equations are meaningful on their own; $M = D$, for instance, is absurd. But since we are in fact saying each is not the other, the problem remains hidden.) Also, *Being* is not Sameness; otherwise we would have to conclude again that $R = M$. This is because if they were the same ($B = S$), when we say Motion and Rest both *are*, then we would be saying that Motion and Rest are the same. On the ground that each is not the other, and each stands by itself, we “may set down . . . sameness as a fourth form,” along with Motion, Rest, and *Being* (254d–255c).

The Stranger establishes Difference as a fifth Form by distinguishing it from *Being*. Some things that *are* (1) “are always spoken of as being what they are just in themselves” and (2) are always spoken of (or have meaning) “as being what they are with reference to other things.” The text makes it rather clear that (2) covers those things that act *only* as bonds: “in fact we undoubtedly find that whatever is different, as a necessary consequence, is what it is with reference to another” (255c–d). In other words, nothing is different by itself; it is different only in relation to another thing, and this relationship is an *instance* of Difference, but not the Difference itself. For instance, a chair is different from (*is not*) a table, and this difference is mediated by a specific difference, which is an instance of Difference.

This effort to distinguish Difference as a separate Form is rather problematic. The intended point of it is that *Being* falls under both (1) and (2), since it has meaning both by itself and in reference to other things. It seems clear enough that, when we speak of *Being* as it is described under (1), we mean it is an independent Form—it is what it is in itself. However, under (2), *Being* cannot be a Form, but an instance of it. Thus it both is a Form and acts as a bond. On the other hand, the Stranger has indicated that Difference falls only under (2), and for this reason, it is not the same as *Being*. This distinction between them presumably suffices to establish the Formhood of Difference (255d–e). However, if Difference only falls under (2)—if it is only a bond—what right does the Stranger have in calling it a Form? Some scholars rightly point out that the entities covered by (2) cannot be Forms.⁵¹ I emphasize the point that the Stranger’s restriction of Difference to (2) is the reason he here establishes Difference as a Form. However, those things that behave only as bonds are incapable

of being Forms. For this reason, the Stranger conflates difference (the instant) with Difference and thus creates another confusing thought.

The problem just mentioned manifests itself differently in what the Stranger says next. He adds that (3) Difference "pervades all the forms, for each one is different from the rest." However, (4) each Form is not different "by virtue of its own nature," but (5) "because [each Form] partakes of the character of difference" (255e). As Cornford justly points out, (4) indicates that "every Form has its peculiar nature, . . . constant identity . . . ; it always is what it is."⁵² Indeed, (4) repeats (1), as given previously. If (4) is true of all Forms, then it cannot be the case that any given Form, when it is given just by itself, has any additional characters or partakes of any other Form. Thus a Form "partakes of the character of difference" *only* with reference, or in relation, to other Forms and acquires the character of difference in and through its relations—not when it is considered itself by itself. Since it is said to be a Form in its own right, this must be true of Difference also, as must be (4). If (4) is true of Difference, then it follows that this Form does not have difference (or anything else) as its attribute, or part. It also follows that Difference falls under (1), meaning that both (1) and (2) are true of Difference (the Stranger said otherwise earlier).

Given (2) and (4), each Form acquires the attribute of difference only in relation to other Forms. This consideration establishes two different respects in which we may speak of each Form: (a) it *is* only itself, and (b) it *is not* the others. The second respect splits into two different respects of its own. First, when (a) is true, each Form *is not* the others in any sense. Second, when it is related to the others, each Form, in some sense, *is* the others (partakes of their character) but *is not*, in its nature, the others.⁵³

Accordingly, the Stranger says that "motion is altogether different from rest." (Is this not a way of combining contraries, albeit negatively?) "So motion [itself] is not rest" in "any sense." This is a special case pertaining to contraries, which never combine. Second, "motion is" when it partakes of *Being*. Again, if (2) and (4) are true of Motion, then this Form must be an independent, self-sustaining entity. Thus it must also be true that, in some sense, as itself by itself, Motion *is not Being* at all. In all likelihood, what the Stranger means to say is either that Motion exists (cf. Cornford) or that Motion is predicated on an unidentified *x* (he will return to the Motion-*Being* relationship next). Third, Motion is not Sameness, yet, "with reference to itself," it is the same as itself and thus partakes of Sameness. Since he is speaking in two different respects, the Stranger points out that saying Motion

is and *is not* the same does not constitute a contradiction. Thus “it is correct to speak of [Motion] both as the same and not the same.” In the respect in which it *is not* the same as Sameness, it is different from it and thus *is not* Sameness itself. However, Motion is also “different from” Difference just as it is different from Sameness. We are told next that Motion is also different from *Being*, even though it blends with it. In short, here the Stranger emphasizes the point that Motion, in one sense, is “really” an entity that “is not” *Being* (255e–256e).

This means that it is possible for Motion, and “all the other kinds,” to be called “that which is not” and that which *is*. In other words, because all Forms are different from each other, they are associable with *is not* (i.e., difference) with reference to each other. Here, “different” comes to mean “is not” in the sense that, for instance, we say Motion “is not” *Being*, Rest, Sameness, or Difference. It also follows from this reasoning that *Being* both “is not,” since it is *not* all the other things, and “is” insofar as “it *is* its single self.” *Being*, then, both “*is* its single self” and “is not” (i.e., is different from) the “indefinite number of [other] . . . things” (256d–257a). Clearly, the Stranger means to say that a Form acquires the characters of difference only when we relate it to other things. But each Form, itself by itself, is still “its single self” and thus does not entail anything else. It follows that when it *is* “its single self,” it is self-identical.

Ultimately, and this is really the main message of the combination theory, “that which is not” is defined as “something that is different” and not as something “that is contrary.” As the Stranger tells Theaetetus, “When it is asserted that a negative signifies a contrary, we shall not agree, but admit no more than this—that the prefix ‘not’ indicates something different from the . . . things designated by the words pronounced after the negative.” Thus “not tall” may mean “equal” or “short” (257b–c).

This passage has received more than its share of interpretations. An important question in this regard is, what, for instance, does the expression “not tall” include? It is clear that it does not include tallness. Establishing what it might include requires an extensive treatment, which falls beyond the scope my present inquiry. For the same reason, I cannot here address whether the Stranger reduces *is not* to difference, as he seems to do, or leaves some room for other forms of negation.⁵⁴

More significant for my purposes is the sense in which the Stranger speaks of the parts of Forms. In other words, is Plato here doing away with his earlier TF, in which he refuses to treat Forms as divisible wholes? I argue that this is not the case, for it is in relation to all

other things, in the whole field of distinctions, that Difference (not-*Being*) is said to have parts. For instance, like Difference, "knowledge also is surely one, but each part of it that commands a certain field is marked off and given a special name proper to itself." Difference is also "parceled out, in the same way as knowledge" (257c-d). Perhaps it is best to state what is meant here negatively. As Edward N. Lee points out, the Form of Knowledge is not in itself differentiated or specifically determined. In other words, the text does not justify the claim that any single Form is a *part* of *Being*, nor does the text lend itself to the interpretation that each part of Difference, or Otherness, is a "segmentation of Otherness—a kind of piece of Otherness (cf. the sail in *Parmenides*)."⁵⁵

Moreover, and rather clearly, the parts of Difference are not Forms. They are the in-field instances of this Form. Said differently, each specific relationship among Forms, and other things, is marked by a specific *instance* of Difference so that, for instance, the specific difference between one person and another person is different from the difference between a person and a chair or between a chair and a plant. In each case, we say one *is not* the other, or is different from it, in a specific way. It seems to me that the Stranger is here repeating the one-over-many theory of Forms; he is not saying that Difference itself is a whole with parts (this terminology is totally absent in this context!), entailing within itself every possible specific distinction of character between things. It is, in one respect, itself by itself and is thus, in accordance with its nature, simply Difference.

The Stranger's following summary of his arguments further speaks against the treatment of Forms as composite entities (wholes with parts): (1) kinds blend; (2) *Being* and Difference pervade all kinds and "one another"; (3) Difference, by virtue of its blending with *Being*, *is* and also *is not Being* since it is not the same as *Being*; and (4) *Being*, by virtue of its blending with Difference, is "different from all the rest of the kinds." For this reason, it "is not" (is different from) any one of these kinds, nor is it "all the others put together, but is only itself." Insofar as it is "only itself," *Being* (and this is true of "all the other kinds [or Forms]") "is not myriads upon myriads of things" (259a-b). It is clear that the Stranger does not mean to say *Being*, itself by itself, is or has a limited number of parts—namely, less than "myriads." Unless there is another way to understand "only itself," he is saying that it has no parts or extra attributes whatsoever.

As Bluck points out, "The crux [here] . . . is the distinction between the 'proper nature' of a thing [Form] and what may be attributed to it."⁵⁶ It is in the second sense of what Forms *are* that the Stranger

says they acquire the attributes of *is*, *is not*, and so on. This is a rather novel intervention on Plato's part. However, since Plato retains the first sense of Forms (as indicated by Bluck), the earlier TF, which stipulates the indivisibility and independence of Forms, has not been "severely compromised" in *Sophist*.⁵⁷ For this reason, *Sophist* also does not propose a TF that coincides with the claims Parmenides makes in *Parmenides*, argument 2.

Victory Declared Prematurely

Their "disobedience to Parmenides" has finally paid off. They have "trespassed far beyond the limits of his prohibition, which says 'Never shall this be proved, that things that are not, are.'" The Stranger has shown, so he claims, not merely that "things that are not, are," but he has also "brought to light the real character of 'not-being.'" "Not-being" is a single Form "to be reckoned with" and is of equal status with *Being*. The in-field instances of these two Forms are also equally real. If so, giving an "account" of "that which is not" is now possible (258c-e).

The Stranger argues next that making a statement (having a discourse) requires the blending of Forms (260a-b). Blending, by definition, requires more than one Form. Since it is not necessary to have multiple Forms participate in a single statement, this is a problematic claim on the Stranger's part.⁵⁸ Perhaps he means to say that meaningful discourse depends on the appropriate combination of names, not Forms (minimally, the combination of a subject and a verb, as he tells us in this context). Relatedly, the Stranger's examples—"Theaetetus sits," and he "flies"—do not include any Forms *qua* Forms. The Stranger's main interest now is to prove that "not-being . . . blends with thinking and discourse." If it does not, then the sophist will retain his right to argue that "everything must be true." The Stranger says again that stating "what is not" is the "same thing as falsity in thought and speech . . . And if falsity exists, deception is possible . . . And once deception exists, images and likenesses and appearance will be everywhere rampant" (260c-d).

The Stranger has earlier made a rather unwarranted transition from difference to "not-being." Now he has equated (once again) *not-being* with "falsity." This transition unfortunately suggests that any statement indicating a difference implies "falsity."⁵⁹ As he did at the beginning of the dialogue, the Stranger here equates falsehood also with "images and likenesses and appearance."⁶⁰ To ask rhetorically, is the picture of Cratylus, or his name, a falsehood? It seems to me that

Cratylus offers a simpler and much clearer definition of falsehood as "wrong attribution" (430b–d) than does the much-heralded *Sophist*.

It thus becomes unclear in what manner the Stranger's following example of a false statement is false: "Theaetetus, whom [the Stranger is] talking to at this moment, [and who happens to be sitting,] flies." This statement "is false," says the Stranger, because it states about Theaetetus "things *different* from the things that are" true of him (263a–b). Since Theaetetus *is not* flying (he is sitting) at the moment, the claim that "he flies" is false in a very obvious sense. However, *is not* in this context refers to the complete absence of an action and implies that *is not* and, by parity, "different" can also refer to the absolute negation of something. The Stranger denied this possible meaning earlier (257b–c). In other words, in order to be consistent with himself, he has to imply that the statement is false in a different sense than the obvious sense I just indicated. Exploring another sense in which the statement could be false is beyond the scope of my present concern. It should suffice to conclude that the Stranger's demonstration of falsehood is confusing and, for this reason, has provoked a rich scholarly debate.⁶¹

The Stranger proceeds to describe the sophist as an "insincere . . . contradiction," "semblance," "image," and "shadow-play" maker (264d–268c). His rationale here is that all these terms imply some sense of not-*being*, and since he has demonstrated the *being* of not-*being*, he has presumably exposed the sophist, who always finds refuge in Parmenides's pronouncement to the effect that not-*being* is an impossibility.

We may deem the Stranger's reductions problematic and regard his theory insufficient for the purpose of convicting the sophist of committing falsehoods. However, Parmenides is not off the hook. He says, "Never shall this be proved, that things that are not, are" or that things that are, are not. Clearly, Parmenides's pronouncement also prohibits us from saying that something that is, is different (*is not* in the Stranger's definition). The reason is that, according to Plato, he is a strict monist. On the one hand, Parmenides cannot accept that there are many different things. On the other hand, difference implies distinction, *unlikeness* if you will, which the grand Eleatic cannot accept, for he says rather inconsistently in his poem that *all things are alike*. This implies strongly—or Plato has sufficient reason to believe it implies—that all are the same without any distinction or difference. After all, Parmenides says that the "all" is "indivisible" and proceeds to associate likeness with *that which only is*. In other words, the "all" is "full of what is" and *what is*, alone. Similarly, his claim that "it is, all

at once, a continuous one” also suggests that he thinks the “all” does not entail any distinctions or differences. In fact, he disparages the mortals for treating even opposites, light and dark, as “distinct from one another” (Parmenides’s Poem, VIII.5–6, VIII.22–24, VIII.56). In short, Parmenides himself equates difference with *what is not* and rules it out of existence. For this reason, the Stranger’s refutation of Parmenides suffices to controvert Parmenides’s pronouncement.

What matters ultimately for my purposes here is that the Stranger (Plato) thinks Parmenides’s pronouncement has been defeated. To repeat, the “disobedience to Parmenides” has paid off. The Stranger has “trespassed far beyond the limits of his prohibition” (258c–e). Successful or not, this declaration of victory indicates that Plato rejects Parmenides’s pronouncement, which the fictional Parmenides also defends in *Parmenides*, argument 6.

CONCLUSION

There is a noteworthy suggestion in *Sophist* to the effect that Parmenides’s principle is self-contradictory. On the one hand, (1) Parmenides claims that only the *one is* (as in H1) or that it is not many in any way. On the other hand, (2) his description of the *one* suggests that it *has being* and thus is a whole with parts (as in H2). What we have here is akin to setting argument 2 against argument 1. Relatedly, *Sophist* does not take up (1) directly as an object of refutation except when the Stranger mentions briefly, but critically, that Parmenides denies any combination and any conception of the real as a plurality. However, the Stranger’s refutation of (2) makes it rather evident that H2 is attributable to the historical Parmenides and that Plato thinks it creates a “measureless perplexity” for Parmenides’s doctrine.

Sophist also briefly, but strongly, suggests that Plato supports H3. This is implied in the Stranger’s definition of Unity itself.

The theory attributed to Friends resembles argument 4. I gave what I believe to be sufficient evidence to endorse the conclusion that the theory of Friends cannot be attributed to the middle-period Plato. For this reason, the Stranger’s criticism of Friends cannot be seen as another attempt by Plato to criticize his middle-period TF.

Argument 5 is difficult to find in a concentrated section of either *Theaetetus* or *Sophist*. It is rather obvious that the theory of *being* and not-*being* (difference) the Stranger proposes in *Sophist* is significantly different from the one we find in argument 5. Relatedly, the fictional Parmenides’s claim that the negative *one* partakes of both *being* and not-*being* has nothing to do with the Stranger’s equation of not-*being*

with difference. Moreover, argument 5 is, in a significance sense, based on the sophistical claim (inspired by Parmenides's pronouncement) that what we say is true, real, and different simply because we say it is. Parmenides repeats this claim six times in argument 5 (160c–d, 160d–e, 160e–161a, 161b, 161e, 162d). This certainly is the form of argumentation Plato takes to task as sophism in both *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*. Besides, argument 5 entails many obvious fallacies and contradictions. For these reasons, it is very unlikely that Plato in argument 5 is trying to find “his way towards the more precise and successful analysis of” *Sophist*.⁶²

The question of what we can and cannot think, say, name, and so on, is one of the most prominent issues raised in *Parmenides* (part II), *Theaetetus* (the section on Protagoras), and *Sophist*. On the one hand, it is stated that what we think (or “know”) and say necessarily coincides with what *is* (according to Parmenides) or with what “appears” to us as *what is* (according to Protagoras). On the other hand, we cannot speak of *what is not at all* or combine *what is* with *what is not* (according to Parmenides's pronouncement). From this follows the Protagorean-sophist view that falsehood is impossible. *Sophist* argues that the sophist's denial of falsehood is safeguarded by Parmenides's pronouncement. The pronouncement is clearly exercised in argument 6. Plato's attribution of the pronouncement to the historical Parmenides in *Sophist* and his subsequent attempt to refute the pronouncement indicate that argument 6 is a Parmenidean exercise and that Plato had a critical attitude toward this argument's hypothesis and conclusion.

As we have seen in the earlier half of this chapter, Socrates's discussion of Protagoras's perception theory of knowledge, and his subsequent criticism of this theory in *Theaetetus*, make it very obvious that argument 7 exercises Protagoras's doctrine, and argument 8 is a Platonic, critical response to this doctrine.

There is no compelling evidence in either *Theaetetus* or *Sophist* to justify the claim that Plato had radically revised or abandoned the middle-period TF. If anything, the most fundamental aspects of this TF are retained in both dialogues, even though they are not very rigorously defended, and in *Sophist*, this TF acquires a rather novel way of articulation. But, to give this point a broader perspective, Plato offers many unique ways of articulating his TF even in his middle-period dialogue. If so, we should be more cautious about declaring that there is somehow a fixed, concise middle-period TF and a radical departure from this TF with and after *Parmenides*. Besides, as we have seen, most of the arguments of *Parmenides* belong to Plato's

opponents—a fact that makes it highly unlikely that Plato's innovations in the later dialogues issue directly from *Parmenides*.

In conclusion, the tripartite interpretations of *Parmenides* are rather implausible. Part I of this dialogue cannot be read as a serious attempt at self-criticism on Plato's part. As we have seen, Parmenides's various objections to Plato's TF are invalid. Part II mostly exercises the doctrines of Eleatics and sophists for satirical purposes. Plato thinks these related doctrines are absurd and/or self-contradictory. This assessment of part II is further confirmed by Plato's treatment of these doctrines in *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*. Moreover, besides superficial resemblances, there is no compelling evidence to endorse the view that part II initiates a new, or revised, theory of Forms, or that the novelties found in *Sophist* issue from part II.

I have no doubt that the formulations made throughout this book leave some loose ends, are at times imprecise, or even entail some inaccuracies. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the broader picture painted in this book is accurate, and its main theses have been adequately defended.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. I am aware that references to Plato's dialogues conventionally include the definite article *the*—hence, for instance, the *Parmenides*. I will ignore this unnecessary convention.
2. For a summary of these controversies, see Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, trans. Glenn R. Morrow and John M. Dillon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 630–45 (Cousin pagination). The controversy was revived during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. For a brief but wonderful study, see Raymond Kliban-sky, *Plato's Parmenides in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: A Chapter in the History of Platonic Studies* (London: Warburg Institute, 1943).
3. For instance, Mitchell H. Miller opens his book on *Parmenides* with the following: “The *Parmenides* has surely proven itself the most enigmatic of Plato's dialogues. In spite of a sustained and extensive history of discussion, there is no positive consensus about the basic issues central to its interpretation.” Mitchell H. Miller, *Plato's Parmenides: The Conversion of the Soul* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 3. Samuel C. Rickless says *Parmenides* is “the most puzzling and notorious of Plato's dialogues,” largely because its intended lesson is unclear. What “in Plato's opinion,” asks Rickless, “is the ultimate lesson of the dialogue?” Despite the concerted efforts of “generations of scholars, . . . there is still nothing approaching consensus on the answer to [this] most pressing question.” Samuel C. Rickless, *Plato's Forms in Transition: A Reading of the Parmenides* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3.
4. For a lovely essay on satire in Plato's works, see H. L. Tracy, “Plato as Satirist,” *The Classical Journal* 33, no. 3 (1937): 153–62.
5. The relevant literature for various versions of the tripartite interpretation will be provided in the ensuing chapters.
6. In this book, unless otherwise stated, the names Zeno, Socrates, Parmenides, and Aristoteles all refer to the fictional characters in the dialogue.
7. The core theses I defend in this book have been proposed before. According to Proclus, some of his “contemporaries and predecessors” read *Parmenides* as an “argumentative (*logikos*),” or “polemic, . . . against Zeno.” Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* (630–32). Proclus, a Neoplatonist, treated this dialogue as an exercise in metaphysics with the

aim of proving the transcendental, beyond-*being* nature of god, or the *one*. In 1578, Jean de Serres (Joannes Serranus) objected to the Neoplatonist interpretation of *Parmenides*. As Raymond Klibansky narrates, Serres argued that “the dialogue contains Plato’s discussion of Eleatic doctrines,” a discussion that satirically imitates “Parmenides’ deductive method” in order to criticize this method and the Eleatic doctrine. Klibansky, *Plato’s Parmenides in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 47. This view proved too unacceptable for an intellectual world still inspired by theology, a world in which Marsilio Ficino’s Neoplatonist interpretation, which he proposed a century before Serres’s intervention, still dominated the attempts to give Christian theology a Platonic basis. At the beginning of the twentieth century, something like Serres’s interpretation resurfaced, most notably in the works of Alfred E. Taylor. For Taylor’s views, see Alfred E. Taylor, “Parmenides, Zeno, and Socrates,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 16 (1915–16): 234–89; Alfred E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (New York: Methuen, 1926); and Alfred E. Taylor, *The Parmenides of Plato* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1934). However, Taylor’s works, besides making some contradictory and ambivalent claims, do not sufficiently defend these views. Today, Taylor’s interpretation is sardonically, and undeservedly, referred to as the “parody” or the “joke” interpretation of *Parmenides*.

CHAPTER 1

1. Plato, *Phaedo*, in *The Dialogues of Plato*, Vol. 1, trans. Benjamin Jowett, 441–501 (London: Macmillan, 1892).
2. Plato, *Meno*, in *The Dialogues of Plato*, Vol. 1, trans. Benjamin Jowett, 349–80 (London: Macmillan, 1892).
3. Socrates provides similar theories of recollection in both *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. In the latter dialogue, he says that “he that loves beauty, is touched by such madness, . . . as soon as he beholds the beauty of this world, is reminded of true beauty” (249d–e). Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Reginald Hackforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952).
4. Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Michael Joyce (London: Everyman’s Library, 1935).
5. Richard D. McKirahan reasons that Parmenides was the first to use deductive arguments. Richard D. McKirahan, *Philosophy before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2011), 151.
6. Plato, *Cratylus*, in *The Dialogues of Plato*, Vol. 1, trans. Benjamin Jowett, 173–229 (London: Macmillan, 1892).
7. Rhea, according to one tradition, means *flow*, and Cronus means *time* that devours everything.
8. It is questionable that Heraclitus subscribed to the pure-flux theory. Aristotle suggests that the pure-flux theory was actually proposed by the

- later Heracliteans, such as the historical Cratylus. According to Aristotle, the real Cratylus “criticized Heraclitus for saying that it is impossible to step twice into the same river; for *he* thought one could not even do it once.” Consequently, the historical Cratylus held the view that, since everything is in pure flux, “nothing could truly be affirmed.” Eventually, Cratylus “did not think it right to say anything but only moved his finger.” Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 1552–1728 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1078b 13–32, 1010a 9–14.
9. Plato, *Republic*, trans. G. M. A. Grube and C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1992).
 10. In *Timaeus*, Plato acknowledges that sound “is transmitted by means of the air” but adds other qualifications that sound silly to us today. Plato, *Timaeus*, in *The Dialogues of Plato*, Vol. 2, trans. Benjamin Jowett, 3–68 (London: Macmillan, 1892).
 11. For a very interesting and detailed interpretation, see Francis M. Cornford, “Mathematics and Dialectic in the ‘Republic’ VI-VII,” in *Studies in Plato’s Metaphysics*, ed. Reginald E. Allen, 61–95 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965). For a more comprehensive analysis of Plato’s dialectic, see Richard Robinson, *Plato’s Earlier Dialectic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962).
 12. Plato scholars often refer to this formulation as the “third bed argument” (TBA). It is clear that Plato here rejects the application of the TBA to his theory of Forms (TF). Moreover, since the Bed is not a bed, as he told us earlier, the TBA, which requires the equivalence of the Bed and a bed or the self-predication of the Form of Bed, is inapplicable to his TF. For a detailed argument on the TBA and a survey of relevant debates, see Gail Fine, *On Ideas: Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato’s Theory of Forms* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 231–40.

CHAPTER 2

1. According to Bertrand Russell, *Parmenides* “contains one of the most remarkable cases in history of self-criticism by a philosopher.” Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), 127. It is generally assumed that this “self-criticism” is directed against the TF. However, there are some disagreements on which version of the TF he actually criticizes. According to Francis M. Cornford, “Plato intends to submit” to criticism the TF found in *Phaedo*. Francis M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides: Parmenides’ Way of Truth and Plato’s Parmenides* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1939), ix, 64. Mitchell H. Miller thinks Plato mainly takes to task the materialistic theory of Forms that the young Socrates of the dialogue defends. Mitchell H. Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides: The Conversion of the Soul* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986). Kenneth M. Sayre says Parmenides

criticizes “the account of Forms” found in both “the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*.” Kenneth M. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson: Translation and Explication of Plato’s Parmenides* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 69. According to Samuel C. Rickless, Socrates defends a theory with unique features, which he calls “the higher theory of forms,” the key feature of which is the radical purity assumption of Forms. Samuel C. Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition: A Reading of the Parmenides* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 6.

2. Cornford claims that some of Parmenides’s objections are obviously invalid and that Plato must have been aware of their invalidity. According to Richard Robinson, Plato regarded the criticisms as serious but not devastating. Richard Robinson, *Plato’s Earlier Dialectic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962). Similarly, Sayre thinks Parmenides’s objections are generally valid but not fully destructive. Plato knew that these objections were inconclusive. Yet he still “rejected, or was prepared to reject, on independent grounds, certain aspects of the theory” of Forms. Kenneth M. Sayre, *Plato’s Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (Las Vegas, NV: Parmenides, 2005), 19. Turnbull claims more firmly that “Plato concedes the damaging character of Parmenides’ critique.” Robert G. Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato’s Late Philosophy* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1998), 4.
3. Michael J. Hansen, “Plato’s *Parmenides*: Interpretations and Solutions to the Third Man,” *Aporia* 20, no. 1 (2010): 65–75, 67. To be fair, the author of this article is here referring to the third man argument (TMA) only. A significant number of scholars justify the “rationale” with the use of analytic and formal-logical techniques popularized by Gregory Vlastos, who says, “By means of these techniques we may now better understand some of the problems Plato attempted to solve and we are, therefore, better equipped to assess the merits of his solutions. The result has been a more vivid sense of the relevance of his thought to the concerns of present-day [philosophy].” Gregory Vlastos, “Introduction,” in *Plato II: Ethics, Politics and Philosophy of Art and Religion*, ed. Gregory Vlastos, iii–xxi (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), vii.

The “rationale” described here was famously put into use in one of Vlastos’s earlier articles on the TMA. In this article, Vlastos berates Cornford for “naively” inferring that Plato must have deemed the TMA against him invalid. However, according to Vlastos himself, the objection does not follow from the premise on which it is built. In order to correct this “glaring discrepancy” and validate the objection, Plato needs to assume the nonidentity and self-predication of Forms. Vlastos goes on to argue that Plato assumed self-predication, but since he was not aware of the different senses of predication (of *is*), he was not able to express it clearly. Vlastos thus admits that he has “no documentation,” or “no textual evidence,” to implicate Plato in self-predication. Instead, he settles on the claim that Plato committed “honest” mistakes. Gregory

Vlastos, "The Third Man Argument in *Parmenides*," in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, ed. Reginald E. Allen, 231–64 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965). Vlastos's "rationale" has been challenged from two specific angles in which the challengers accept the most fundamental assumption of the "rationale"—namely, that Plato really intended to seriously criticize himself in *Parmenides*. For example, Constance C. Meinwald objects to Vlastos's honest-perplexity claim by arguing that Plato is already familiar with the problem Vlastos identifies and has a solution to it in part II. Thus she too assumes that Parmenides stands for Plato in the dialogue and is bent upon criticizing himself. Constance C. Meinwald, *Plato's Parmenides* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 10, 155–57. On the other hand, a (minority) group of scholars has become increasingly dissatisfied with the methodological aspirations of the "rationale" popularized by Vlastos. For instance, Reginald E. Allen says that "the treatment of limited topics in abstraction from context," which is commonly practiced by the analytic approaches to Plato's dialogues, "is a constant inducement in the study of Plato to oversimplification, artificial technicality in matters remote to text, and scholarly impressionism." Reginald E. Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, rev. ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), xiv. On similar grounds, Turnbull is also not impressed with the "result." He points out that, "between the appearance of Cornford's 1939 book and the publication of Reginald Allen's . . . [book] in 1983, there is no significant literature on . . . [*Parmenides*] unless one counts the stir over Gregory Vlastos' 1954 paper on the so-called Third Man." Turnbull observes that "there is little" in this euphoria "that helps in understanding the *Parmenides*." Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy*, 192.

4. Unless stated otherwise, all direct quotations from *Parmenides* are from Plato, *Parmenides*, in *The Dialogues of Plato*, Vol. 2, trans. Benjamin Jowett, 86–140 (London: Macmillan, 1892). When necessary, I will supplement and modify Jowett's translation by consulting other translations of *Parmenides*. These additional translations can be found in the following titles: Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*; Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*; Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*; Mary L. Gill and Paul Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1996); Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy*; Allan H. Coxon, *The Philosophy of Forms: An Analytical and Historical Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum 1999); Samuel Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and Arnold Hermann and Sylvania Chrysakopoulou, *Plato's Parmenides: Text, Translation and Introductory Essay* (Las Vegas, NV: Parmenides, 2010).
5. All quotes from Parmenides's poem in this book are from John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1892), 196–203.

6. This connection is rarely acknowledged. For an exception, see Allan H. Coxon, *The Philosophy of Forms: An Analytical and Historical Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum 1999).
7. In *Apology*, it is said that Callias "has paid more in sophists' fees than all the rest put together" (20a). Plato, *Apology*, in *The Last Days of Socrates*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2011).
8. Plato, *Alcibiades I*, in *Plato's Dialogues*, Vol. 2, trans. Benjamin Jowett, 732–72 (London: Macmillan, 1892).
9. Isocrates, *Helen*, in *Isocrates: Evagoras, Helen, Busiris, Plataicus, Concerning the Team of Horses, Trapeziticus, Against Callimachus, Aegineticus, Against Lochites, Against Euthymus*, Vol. 3, trans. George Norlin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 10.2–3, 10.6.
10. John Palmer, in a recent study, agrees that there is a "ring of truth" to Isocrates's evaluation of Zeno and Melissus as eristic philosophers, but he disagrees with an ancient view to the effect that Parmenides also belonged to the same camp. John Palmer, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 216–17. For my purposes, it suffices that some ancient Greeks, including Aristotle, rightly or wrongly put Parmenides in the same camp with Zeno and Melissus.
11. Jonathan Barnes argues that the historical Parmenides was not a monist. Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London: Routledge, 1982), 163–64, 185. Patricia Curd makes a similar claim but says Parmenides was only a "predicational" monist, and this monism is consistent with "numerical pluralism." Patricia Curd, *The Legacy of Parmenides: Eleatic Monism and Later Presocratic Thought* (Las Vegas, NV: Parmenides, 2004), 6. On the other hand, Charles H. Kahn, argues that Parmenides was an "uncompromising" or a "radical" monist. Charles H. Kahn, "The Thesis of Parmenides," *The Review of Metaphysics* 22, no. 4 (1969): 700–724, 714, 720.

My concern is strictly with how Plato interpreted Parmenides. As it will be shown throughout this book, Plato thought he was an inconsistent monist. Vlastos argues that Plato correctly branded Parmenides as a monist, though exaggerated the "importance of the unity of Being relative to its other attributes." Gregory Vlastos, *Studies in Greek Philosophy, Volume 1: The Presocratics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 276–80. John Palmer, on the other hand, claims that Plato's "middle-period appropriation" of Parmenides was based on his perception of Parmenides as a pluralist. John Palmer, *Plato's Reception of Parmenides* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 92–93, 98.

12. Sayre observes the same points I just outlined in the previous paragraph and wonders "at Plato's audacity in representing Parmenides as the agent of his own refutation." However, Sayre thinks this self-refutation is an "apparent anomaly" that can be mitigated by the fact that Plato, in *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, portrays Parmenides very favorably. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 59. Sayre acknowledges his debt to Cornford on

- this issue. The latter says, “the greatest, in [Plato’s] estimation, was Parmenides.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 63. Similarly, Robinson says, “Plato very likely considered Parmenides great enough and distant enough to be his [own] critic” in *Parmenides*. Robinson, *Plato’s Earlier Dialectic*, 265. Meinwald agrees: “The twist in [Parmenides] is that Socrates (here a youth) is the interlocutor, while the venerable Parmenides is the questioner.” Meinwald, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 5. James Duerlinger, like Cornford, claims that “Plato sees himself the rightful heir to the practice of the art of dialectic first created by Parmenides in Elea.” James Duerlinger, *Plato’s Sophist: A Translation with a Detailed Account of Its Theses and Arguments* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 5. Vlastos insists that Plato not only respected Parmenides but also put Zeno in the same respectable camp with him—*Sophist* furnishes evidence for this. Vlastos, *Studies in Greek Philosophy*, 287. Palmer partially disagrees with Vlastos: Plato respected Parmenides but not Zeno. Palmer, *Plato’s Reception of Parmenides*. For a similar view, see Arnold Hermann, “Parricide of Heir? Plato’s Uncertain Relationship to Parmenides,” in *Parmenides, Venerable and Awesome*, ed. Néstor-Luis Cordeiro, 147–66 (Las Vegas, NV: Parmenides, 2011); and Hermann and Chrysakopoulou, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 11–14.
13. Plato, *Sophist*, in *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and the Sophist*, ed. Francis M. Cornford (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1935).
 14. Palmer suppresses the fact that Plato also places Parmenides in the same Eleatic camp as Zeno in this passage. Palmer, *Plato’s Reception of Parmenides*, 101.
 15. Harold Cherniss, “Parmenides and the ‘Parmenides’ of Plato,” *American Journal of Philology* 53 (1932): 122–38, 125.
 16. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 63.
 17. Sayre insists that “special weight is given here to the separate status of Forms.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 73.
 18. Aristotle ambiguously claims that Plato denied Forms to some unworthy things. Yet he also says Plato was right to assume that there are as many Forms as there are natural objects. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 1552–1728 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1070a 15–21.
 19. Cornford speculates that Parmenides’s inquiry represents Plato’s attempt to broaden the scope of his metaphysics. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 83. Taylor, on the other hand, suggests that Parmenides’s response is meant by Plato to be a “polite irony,” since Parmenides is naturally inclined to deny *being* to sensible things. Alfred E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (New York: Methuen, 1926), 351. Both of these views are far-fetched.
 20. According to Rickless, “that the problem raised here concerns the fact that some forms are such that they cannot be conceived as other than sensible is confirmed by the list of forms for which (we are told) no such

problem arises. These are the forms mentioned first: justice, beauty, and goodness.” These Forms can be easily conceived as “non-sensible.” This is not the case with “mud or hair.” Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 55–56. Also see Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 46. There is a ring of truth to Rickless’s second observation, but we must not assume that Plato ever thought that the Forms of sensible things could not be conceived as nonsensible entities.

21. Harold F. Cherniss, “Parmenides and the ‘Parmenides’ of Plato,” 135–36.
22. Allen says Socrates’s analogy is “an absurd evasion.” Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 132–33.
23. Unfortunately, it has become the custom to blame Socrates for Parmenides’s unwarranted moves. Miller says Socrates ultimately fails to give “super-sensible” meaning to Forms. Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 49–50. According to Meinwald, Socrates’s “lack of clarity leads him into trouble” throughout part I. Meinwald, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 11. Also see Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 23, 53.
24. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 76. Sayre, however, thinks Plato’s analogy commits him to a temporal model of Forms as opposed to the spatial model proposed by Parmenides. I disagree: Socrates’s analogy is just an analogy, without any extra commitments.
25. Rickless thinks the difficulty Parmenides raises in this context is reasonable, for “it is impossible for anything to be *small* by having something *added* to it.” Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 62, 63. Alas, as Rickless himself quotes it, the text says the recipient things will be “smaller,” not *small*. Besides, it is not impossible for a thing to be small, even after something is added to it.
26. Plato satirizes this kind of sophism in *Euthydemus* numerous times. For instance, he makes the sophist Dionysodorus argue that since Ctessipus *has* a father dog (of puppies), then he *has* a dog father, and being *his*, the father dog must be his father and the puppies his brothers (298d–e). Plato, *Euthydemus*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, 385–420 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961).
27. As Cornford rightly points out, “Parmenides’ example, ‘Largeness itself’ or the ‘large itself’” converts this Form into “a large *thing*, which could be divided into parts.” This understanding of the Form of Largeness, or any Form, is not suggested by Socrates. More generally, Cornford reasons that Parmenides’s objections “might be understood as Plato’s own rejection of such a crude interpretation” of Forms presented by Parmenides. Thus Cornford now argues that Plato is using Parmenides to criticize the “crude” theory of Forms, which was proposed by such figures as “Eudoxus,” and not his own earlier TF. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 87. According to Russell M. Dancy, the theory must have been proposed and discussed in the Academy, but it is not clear that

- Eudoxus also proposed it. Russell M. Dancy, *Two Studies in the Early Academy* (New York, State University of New York Press, 1991), 22–23.
28. Miller says Socrates “denies forms to ‘the things which we see.’” Then Miller oddly assumes that this denial is somehow the same as making Forms sensible objects. Thus he makes an unwarranted leap and says that the “conundrums” Parmenides just produced stem from Socrates’s treatment of the Forms of “largeness, equality, and smallness” as “large or equal or small things, respectively, composed of smaller things as their parts. In each case, the form is blatantly misconceived as a physical whole of parts and, so, as having just the same nature as the things that participate in it.” Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 51. I fail to find any evidence in *Parmenides* to the effect that Socrates “blatantly” misconceives each Form “as a physical whole of parts” and of “just the same nature as the things” in which Forms participate. Miller seems to assume that what Parmenides attributes to Socrates is precisely what the latter argues. Sayre, on the other hand, blames Socrates for accepting the sail analogy, which Socrates actually did not do. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 318–19, n. 42. Rickless similarly argues that Socrates defends the “pie model” of Forms. Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 56ff. Rickless’s claim puts him at odds with himself. On the one hand, he assumes that Socrates is defending the pie model, for which he is here rightly criticized. On the other hand, one of Rickless’s central arguments is that Plato intends to criticize the “higher theory” of Forms, which assumes that Forms are indivisible entities—that is, they are nothing like pies.
 29. According to Cornford, Socrates thinks Forms exist only in our minds. If so, Socrates “implies that if mind did not exist or think there would be no Forms.” Cornford knows fully well that Plato never implied this. Thus he attributes Socrates’s claim to the members of “the Academy.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 91. However, according to Sayre, Socrates means to say, “Forms can be grasped directly by thought.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 82–84. Sayre’s view is more consistent with the flow of the text.
 30. Based on his earlier assumption, quoted in the previous footnote, Cornford reasons now that “the conclusion is that the Form is the object of thought, not the act of thinking. It follows that there is no ground for saying that it exists only in a mind and in this way denying its independent existence.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 91. Alas, Parmenides is not here criticizing Socrates for denying the independent existence of Forms. Moreover, Parmenides himself took Socrates’s statement to mean that Forms are objects of thought. Cornford misses this step and thinks Socrates’s statement implies that a Form is an “act of thinking” and is now being scolded for this reason. In fact, it is Parmenides who will conjure up this implication in the ensuing discussion.
 31. The text is ambiguous. Jowett’s translation accords with the Gill and Ryan translation: there is a “compelling necessity for that which is like

to partake of the same one Form as what is like it.” Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 134. Cornford’s translation reads that two like things must “share . . . the same thing (character).” As Cornford notes, this reading is based on the omission of *eidōs*. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 93, n. 2. The omission is warranted by Parmenides’s ensuing conclusion.

32. Cornford’s translation implies that the like character two things share is the Form itself. Cornford, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 93. Allen’s translation of Parmenides’s question gives us yet another version: “But will not that of which like things have a share so as to be like be the character itself?” Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 11. This version avoids equating Forms and their instances but implies that the Form of Likeness (one of the like things) self-predicates and hence *has* the character of likeness. Sayre’s translation yields slightly different results: “And will not that of which like things partake in order to be alike be that Form itself?” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 11. This translation implies that in order to be alike, multiple things must partake of a single Form and thus does not clearly produce Parmenides’s intended result—namely, that the shared character of like things is the same as the Form that informs that character. The Gill and Ryan translation is also ambiguous: “If like things are like by partaking of something,” that something will “be the form itself.” Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 134.
33. Cornford adds that Plato “did not give up speaking of Forms as patterns in the nature of the things.” Patterns, images, and imitations are “derived from the original,” and this is all that “Socrates’ statement . . . suggests.” In other words, “no infinite regress is involved so long as we do not identify the relation of likeness with that of copy to original.” Thus “it is naïve to conclude that Plato himself regarded [the infinite regress] objections as seriously damaging his theory, although the nature of participation is undoubtedly obscure and hard for our imaginations to conceive.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 93–95. I fully agree with Cornford.

Even Vlastos, who popularized and defended Parmenides’s infinite-regress objection, admits that this argument is not a valid objection to the theory of Forms just stated by Socrates. In order for it to be valid, Socrates has to assume that Forms self-predicate; he does not make this assumption. Vlastos, “The Third Man Argument in *Parmenides*,” 236–38. Vlastos thinks Plato intended to produce a valid criticism against his theory but made an honest mistake. As S. Marc Cohen notes, many Plato scholars have been repeating Vlastos’s aim to “discover the suppressed premises of the [TMA] argument.” S. Marc Cohen, “The Logic of Third Man,” *The Philosophical Review* 80, no. 4 (1971): 448–75. Sayre, on the other hand, thinks Socrates’s statement actually equates Forms and things that partake of them. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 321, n. 60, 11. For a very interesting discussion of the function of the image analogy in Plato’s dialogues, see Richard Patterson, *Image and Reality*

- in *Plato's Metaphysics* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1985). Patterson agrees that Socrates does not equate images with Forms in *Parmenides*. *Ibid.*, 51–62.
34. Palmer thinks Parmenides's present comment denies the existence of Forms altogether. Palmer, *Plato's Reception of Parmenides*, 108–9. I think it is very obvious that the objection only denies their participation in us and in our world.
 35. Richard D. McKirahan, *Philosophy before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2011), 61.
 36. It is commonly and reasonably accepted that the Megaric Stilpo assumed the radical separation of the universals from the individual cases. For an account of Stilpo's philosophy, see Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, Vol. 1, trans. Robert Drew Hicks (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1925), 125–28. Plato cannot possibly have Stilpo in mind here, since the latter was about 12 years old when Plato died. However, it is reasonable to assume that Stilpo repeated the arguments of some older Megarics.
 37. Gill says Parmenides's "assumption is fully justified, because the preceding discussion has shown that Socrates cannot explain how participation works." She adds that this "more radical view [of separation] is a direct consequence of Socrates' failure in the preceding arguments to provide an acceptable account of the relation between physical objects and forms." Gill reasons that "without such an account, we must assume a complete separation between forms and us." Mary L. Gill, "Introduction," in Mary L. Gill and Paul Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 1–116 (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1996), 45–46. Gill's conclusion is not only unjustifiable but also unjust. Allen also blames Socrates for necessitating the "radical" separation of Forms. He says Socrates has previously agreed at 130b that Ideas are separate from their instances, and this agreement naturally led to Parmenides's present objection. Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 193–95, 205. However, and clearly, Socrates's admission at 130b acknowledges that this so-called separation still allows the "other things" to partake of Forms. Sayre also holds the view that Socrates, and even the middle-period TF, assumes the "complete," "entirely," "radical" separation, or the "unqualified autonomy," of Forms. Somehow, Sayre makes this claim in the very context in which he also discusses Plato's theory of participation. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 88–91.
 38. As Robinson puts it, "There is no trace in the *Parmenides* of the upward path of the *Republic*. The words 'unhypothesized' [first principle] . . . Parmenides speaks of the 'truth' (135d) and of being 'sure of discerning the true' (136c) and of 'coming upon the true and possessing intelligence' (*vous* 136e) . . . These three little expressions are incidental in a discussion whose general tendencies . . . seem positively hostile to the spirit of the" Platonic dialectic described in *Republic*. Robinson, *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, 278–79. What Robinson fails to admit is that Plato

does not propose the method to be exercised in *Parmenides* merely as mental “gymnastics.” The method is an elaborate version of Zeno’s method, which necessarily is hostile to the spirit of the Divided Line. Sayre, on the other hand, argues (asserts really) that the method Parmenides is to exercise is a more developed version of the middle-period dialectic. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 103–5.

39. Taylor thinks “idle talk” is a reference to the exercises Parmenides is about to recommend and not to what Plato would consider proper philosophy. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work*, 359. Cornford disagrees: “Plato defiantly adopts the word [idle-talk] to describe his own procedure,” and the method Parmenides is about to describe is not “a training in eristic sophistry.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 103, n. 1. Part II will prove Taylor right.
40. According to Allen, the Greek says the exercise recommended by Parmenides is to cover the field of Forms *only*. Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 183. Allen has to insist on his claim because he assumes that part II is entirely concerned with the Form of Unity. According to Sayre, the ensuing description of the method suggests that both fields are to be covered. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 323–24, n. 11. Cornford’s translation accords with Sayre’s consideration. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 104. For a similar translation, see Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 139.
41. Parmenides’s poem criticizes the mortals for positing multiple—nay, opposite—Forms: “Mortals have settled in their minds to speak of two forms” (VIII.53).
42. Taylor suggests, not without plausibility, that the reference to the exercise as a “laborious game” is “a plain hint [by Plato] that the antinomies now to follow [from Parmenides’s arguments] are not to be taken quite seriously, and that we should not be surprised if there is a conscious ‘sophistry’ about them.” Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work*, 360. Given the rampant sophisms in part II, it is difficult to argue against Taylor’s claim.
43. Allen likewise thinks Aristoteles is placed in the dialogue because he is naïve enough to accept the “absurd,” invalid conclusions Parmenides is about to generate. Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 224–27. On the other hand, Scolnicov thinks Aristoteles, because he is so young, has an “unspoiled mind” and thus is the most “trustworthy” of all. Scolnicov goes on to establish a general rule on Plato’s behalf: “In the early dialogues, young respondents are, as a rule, more trustworthy than adults with set opinions. Plato gives Aristoteles (not unlike Meno’s slave boy) practically no individual characterization, so as to make the conclusions as generally valid as possible.” Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 78. Meinwald suggests, even less plausibly, that we take “the idea that Aristotle [Aristoteles] is an adequate respondent . . . seriously.” Meinwald, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 22.
44. Plato, *Seventh Letter*, in *Thirteen Epistles of Plato*, trans. Levi A. Post (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925).

45. Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 227.
46. Taylor, *The Parmenides of Plato*, 10.

CHAPTER 3

1. John N. Findlay claims that the conclusions of all these arguments amount to the "whole truth," which can only be expressed "in the complete round of our utterances." John N. Findlay, *Plato: The Written and Unwritten Doctrines* (New York: Routledge, 1974), 252–53. Findlay's interpretation has a Hegelian ring to it. Georg W. F. Hegel says of *Parmenides's* final, overall conclusion that "this result may seem strange" to those who are "far from accepting . . . quite abstract determinations," which "show themselves dialectically and are really the identity with their 'other;' and this is the truth." However, Hegel also says the dialectic in *Parmenides* is "not to be regarded as complete in every regard . . . The embracing of the opposites in one, and the expression of this unity, is chiefly lacking in the *Parmenides*, which has hence . . . only a negative result." G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 2, trans. E. S. Haldane (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1894), 56–60. For an interesting critique of Hegel's assumptions, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976), Ch. 1.

Cornford's seminal work makes three basic claims about part II, which are not easily reconcilable with each other. First, Plato intends to shift away from his Parmenidean roots by incorporating Pythagorean elements to his TF. Second, the eight arguments of part II produce *different*, and not contradictory, conclusions. This is because the subject of each hypothesis is "obviously" different. Third, Plato deliberately poses "a challenge to the student to discover for himself the ambiguities of the [main] Hypotheses . . . instead of presenting him with conclusions which he might indolently accept without making them his own." Francis M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides: Parmenides' Way of Truth and Plato's Parmenides* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1939), 110–12, 144, 244–45.

It would not be too far-fetched to claim that many main interpretations of *Parmenides* in more recent decades have been critical responses to Cornford's interpretation. Against Cornford's second claim, Reginald E. Allen argues that all hypotheses are based on the same subject, which is (the Form of) Unity. If so, the conclusions of the eight arguments are contradictory, and the overall conclusion of part II is obviously "absurd." This observation leads Allen to challenge Cornford's first claim also. *Parmenides*, he says, "presents metaphysical perplexities, not positive doctrine." For this reason, it is, in the main, "*aporetic*." Yet he accepts Cornford's third claim: part II has "a serious purpose," which is to invite Plato's students to "be prepared for further inquiry"

and to ask “which among his assumptions must be rejected, and why, and with what result?” Reginald E. Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, rev. ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 211–18, 227–28, 289. In short, the main purpose of part II is to provide Plato’s students with mental exercises, according to Allen.

Mitchell Miller offers another version of the hidden-lesson claim: Plato deliberately makes Parmenides produce contradictions (specific and general), which the young dramatic characters of the dialogue “fail to penetrate.” Thus Plato “invites and provokes” the young Academicians (and the “critical hearer”) “to make this penetration for themselves.” Miller assures us that there is a “subsurface significance,” a deliberately hidden lesson, beneath the contradictions that is waiting to be discovered by “critical rethinking.” According to Miller, the dialogue presumably has four stages: In part I, (1) Zeno elicits certain answers from Socrates; (2) Parmenides then refutes these answers, thus forcing Socrates into *aporia*. In part II, (3) Parmenides, with the use of the method, redirects the attention of the students to the ways in which the *aporia* could be resolved. Finally, (4) the dialogue, through working out the hypotheses, returns to the problems raised in the first stage of the dialogue. However, Miller observes that this grand “moment of return” entails Zeno-esque “logical deficiencies,” which are marked by “contradictory consequences” and a fundamental fallacy. In other words, we return to the initial Eleatic problem and fallacy, highlighted by Socrates, and not to the problems of Socrates identified by Parmenides. What, then, is Plato’s purpose in taking the “hearer,” or the students of the Academia, through a burdensome detour? Plato wants “the hearer” to “want to go back to the beginning for a critical rethinking of the puzzles Parmenides has put before them.” Mitchell H. Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides: The Conversion of the Soul* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 9–10.

With Constance C. Meinwald’s intervention, we begin to see the emergence of attempts to find in part II a more positive, explicit lesson. Meinwald’s main aim is to resolve the contradictions of part II. She claims that the subject, the *one* (presumably standing for Forms), is the same in all cases but undergoes two “kinds of predication.” The first kind considers the *one* “in relation to itself [*pros heauto*].” The second kind of predication posits the subject “in relation to the others [*pros ta alla*].” Meinwald promises that, if we follow her formula, the ostensible contradictions would disappear. Moreover, she claims that the formula leads to an improved TF, which Plato utilizes in his later dialogues. Constance C. Meinwald, *Plato’s Parmenides* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4, 25–26, 74–75. As others have rightly noted, Meinwald’s interesting formula is too neat and inadequate to explain the complex movements of part II, which she sidelines by ignoring

significant portions of *Parmenides* in her book. Importantly, her work overlooks the historical significance of the arguments of part II.

Kenneth M. Sayre also attempts to explain and resolve the contradictions of part II. As he admits, his solution is inspired by Cornford's work. Some scholars think the eight arguments come in pairs (arguments 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and so on) and that each pair reveals a specific cross-argument contradiction (I agree with this claim). According to Sayre, there is no textual evidence for this pairing. He thus pairs the eight arguments differently (argument 1 with 6, 2 with 5, 3 with 7, and 4 with 8). If we follow his way of pairing these, he assures us that "the conclusions drawn from successive hypotheses no longer appear contradictory." Sayre also maintains that his "alternative pairing indicates with greater clarity than before the historical contexts relevant to the interpretation of various hypotheses." Thus hypothesis 2, which governs argument 2, pertains to "the traditional Pythagorean program." Plato's alleged aim here is to incorporate the "Pythagorean program" into his own, which, Sayre says, is also reflected in arguments 3, 5, and 7. Arguments 1 and 6 are associated with the doctrine of the historical Parmenides, and arguments 4 and 8 highlight the problems associated with the theory Socrates presents in part I. Kenneth M. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson: Translation and Explication of Plato's Parmenides* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 18–20.

Robert G. Turnbull is generally sympathetic to Sayre's program. He maintains that four of the eight arguments are Platonic, and the other four belong to the historical Parmenides. Presumably, Plato defends and develops his theory of Forms in arguments 2, 3, 5, 7. Turnbull says argument 2, which is by far the lengthiest argument, is the "key to the *Parmenides*"; this is where we are meant to find the incorporation of a new program, or lesson, into Plato's theory of Forms. This program treats Forms as divisible and numerical entities from which multitudes of parts within parts issue. Turnbull also insists that the method utilized in part II, which he calls "the Method of Suppositions," shows Plato's appreciation for the historical Parmenides. Presumably, Plato uses this method, hence the general purpose of part II as "a means of exhibiting the *logical* foundations of the world." Robert G. Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1998), 5–6, 49, and throughout.

Samuel Scolnicov argues that part I leads to *aporia*, and part II leads to *euporia*. Scolnicov insists that the conclusions of part II are hypothetical and thus depend on their suppositions. Furthermore, the eight arguments exercise two different modes of *being*, independent and dependent. The puzzle Plato wants to solve is the puzzle of participation—that is, how the independent Forms become many in and through participating in the other *beings*, which depend on Forms. Reversely, "the being of the many depends on the being of the one."

Somehow, Scolnicov assumes that part II shows the necessity of “an ontology of mutual participation of forms in each other and unidirectional participation of sensible things in Forms.” (Perhaps, given his main argument, Scolnicov means the participation of Forms in sensible things.) In a nutshell, Plato solves his own dilemma, raised in part I, by overcoming the Eleatic ontology. The first four arguments accomplish Plato’s mission, and the last four indicate the contrast between Plato’s new accomplishment and the historical Parmenides’s account. However, the Parmenidean *one* is still retained. Samuel Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 166.

Samuel C. Rickless thinks Plato is exclusively concerned with undoing his middle-period TF—especially with what he calls the radical purity (RP) of Forms (RP means that “no form can have contrary properties.”) Rickless assumes, in a rather nonchalant manner, that “the one” of each hypothesis has the same meaning in all eight hypotheses, all of which he, one way or another, links to RP. He claims that part II is a general refutation of RP, which evolves into the replacement of RP with Forms that are “more prosaic, laid low, sharing features with the sensible world they were originally [in the middle-period dialogues] were meant to outshine.” Samuel C. Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition: A Reading of the Parmenides* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 100, 240.

2. As Richard Robinson aptly argues, “it is surely inconceivable that Plato meant us to find a positive doctrine [in part II].” Richard Robinson, “Plato’s *Parmenides* I,” *Classical Philology* 37 (1942): 51–76, 51.
3. As Taylor points out, “the dialogue provides no solution of the problems it has raised.” Alfred E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (New York: Methuen, 1926), 360. Owen agrees, but for a different reason—namely, that the TF has been devastatingly undermined by Parmenides’s criticism in part I, and for this reason, there is no solution to be provided in part II or elsewhere. Gwilym E. L. Owen, “The Place of the *Timaeus* in Plato’s Dialogues,” in *Studies in Plato’s Metaphysics*, ed. Reginald E. Allen, 313–38 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 320. Allen also says part II “dictates no solution.” However, he adds that Parmenides will address the dilemma of participation at the level of “utmost generality” and “will provide ample indication of where the source lies,” but he “will not teach the reader” how to fix it. Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 205–6.

I disagree with all the following views: Gilbert Ryle says, “In the second part of the dialogue, Parmenides takes up [Socrates’] challenge” and shows how “Forms themselves underwent opposite predicates.” Gilbert Ryle, “Plato’s *Parmenides*,” in *Studies in Plato’s Metaphysics*, ed. Reginald E. Allen, 97–147 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 100–101. Meinwald says, “Plato meant the second part of the dialogue to bear on the problems of the first.” Meinwald, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 4,

5–19. Sayre says part II modifies and refines the leading principles of the immature, earlier TF, which is defended by Socrates in part I. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 93ff. Turnbull says part II is both “a response to the problems raised in the first part of the dialogue” and “a significant departure in Plato’s mature thought.” This departure, he says, positively links *Parmenides* to “the other late dialogues.” Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato’s Late Philosophy*, 140–41. Scolnicov says, “The two parts of the dialogue form a coherent and integrated whole, in which Part II” provides “what Plato considers to be an adequate answer to the [objections] construed by Parmenides in Part I of the dialogue.” Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 3. Rickless also thinks the criticisms given in part I are legitimate, and part II solves the problems highlighted in part I. Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 6.

The myth that Plato, in part II, attempts to solve problems associated with his TF is often defended by extracting isolated passages from the text. I think Walter G. Runciman gives the proper response to such approaches: it is not “legitimate to extract from the hypotheses selected doctrinal implications . . . unless the selection is justified by a satisfactory interpretation of the dialectical exercise as a whole.” Walter G. Runciman, “Plato’s *Parmenides*,” in *Studies in Plato’s Metaphysics*, ed. Reginald E. Allen, 149–84 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 166–67, n. 1.

4. Cornford claims that only “a few” arguments in part II are, and unintentionally so, “formally defective or fallacious.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, vii, 115. According to Ryle, *Parmenides* “is philosophically serious, in the sense that its author thought its arguments were valid and that its problem was one of philosophical importance.” Ryle “Plato’s *Parmenides*,” 97. Malcolm Schofield repeats the same claim: the arguments are “intended by Plato to strike the reader as plausible and indeed compelling.” Malcolm Schofield, “The Antinomies of Plato’s *Parmenides*,” *The Classical Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1977): 139–58, 144. For a similar argument, see Gwilym E. L. Owen, *Logic, Science, and Dialectic: Collected Papers in Greek Philosophy* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1987), 85–103. Sayre concurs: “All of the arguments of *Parmenides* II are logically defensible, with respect both to validity and to the truth (from Plato’s perspective) of their premises.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, xx. Rickless disparages those who think otherwise: it is “unreasonable in the extreme to suppose that Plato does not originally set out to provide a series of sound arguments in the Deductions [i.e., arguments].” Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 238.

Others disagree with this popular view but think the fallacies and contradictions are meant to instruct Plato’s students rather than satirize the method and the doctrines of his opponents. According to Robinson, “every individual inference is made possible by an ambiguity”; many of the inferences are fallacious or absurd. It is highly likely that Plato

recognized them to be so. Richard Robinson, "Plato's *Parmenides* II," *Classical Philology* 37, no. 2 (1942): 159–86, 159–62. Plato certainly did not mean for part II to be "a model of reasoning" for "us to copy." However, Robinson says elsewhere that Plato meant for the dialogue to serve as "a manifesto" for his students to help them engage in "more dialectic and less enthusiasm." Robinson, *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, 265. This view is very ancient. As Proclus noted 15 centuries ago, "Some say that its [sole] purpose is logical exercise" or a training in dialectic. Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, trans. Glenn R. Morrow and John M. Dillon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 634. Runciman argues that "the exhaustive application of this method" in part II "has been shown to lead as legitimately to one set of contradictory conclusions as to another." He reasons that Plato's purpose is to show how the method "does not solve the difficulties in which Socrates finds himself [in part I], but it shows how these difficulties can arise and hints that some other method is necessary. This [necessary] method is the method of diaeresis." Runciman, "Plato's *Parmenides*," 181.

There are also those (few in number) who think, as I do, that fallacies are rampant and parody both the doctrines and method of Plato's opponents. As Taylor aptly points out, Plato's "real purpose" in making *Parmenides* generate "perplexing 'antinomies' is to expose the contradictions in which we are entangled if we commit ourselves to the premises of certain other philosophers [not Socrates] who are the unnamed objects of Plato's criticism, and we are also permitted to suspect that the *methods* of these philosophers as well as their premises are intended to be satirized; in fact, that the *logic which* leads to the 'antinomies' is the logic of the victims rather than of their critic [i.e., Plato]." Alfred E. Taylor, *The Parmenides of Plato* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1934), 8–9. Paul Shorey says part II actually contains many fallacious deductions, and "the illustration of these fallacies is too symmetrical and exhaustive to be unconscious." Paul Shorey, *What Plato Said* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 242. Harold Cherniss maintains that "the second part of the dialogue is formally an elaborate parody of the logic-chopping of Zeno," which is applied to the historical Parmenides's "monistic *Being*" to produce paradoxes. Harold F. Cherniss, "Parmenides and the Parmenides of Plato," *The American Journal of Philology* 53, no. 2 (1932): 122–38, 122. For a useful demonstration of a few of the fallacies, see Richard Patterson, "Forms, Fallacies, and the Functions of Plato's 'Parmenides,'" *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science* 32, no. 4 (1999): 89–106.

5. All direct quotations from *Parmenides* are from Plato, *Parmenides*, in *The Dialogues of Plato*, Vol. 2, trans. Benjamin Jowett, 86–140 (London: Macmillan, 1892). When necessary, I will supplement and modify Jowett's translation by consulting other translations of *Parmenides*. These additional translations can be found in the following titles: Cornford,

- Plato and Parmenides*; Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*; Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*; Mary L. Gill and Paul Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1996); Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy*; Allan H. Coxon, *The Philosophy of Forms: An Analytical and Historical Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum 1999); Samuel Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and Arnold Hermann and Sylvana Chrysakopoulou, *Plato's Parmenides: Text, Translation and Introductory Essay* (Las Vegas, NV: Parmenides, 2010).
6. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 116; Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 17; Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 141; Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides* Plato, 80; Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 16; Jowett, *Parmenides*, 98; Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy*, 51.
 7. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 137–38.
 8. According to Aristotle, Parmenides held the “false” view that “‘is’ is used in a single way only.” Aristotle, *Physics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 1, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 315–446 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 186a 24, 186a 33.
 9. Cornford adds the strained conclusion that the *one* also cannot be any different from anything else, for “there cannot be no other one for it to be other than.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 124. This conclusion is not explicitly made in argument 1. For other interpretations that are similar to mine, see Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 146 and Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides*, 86. However, Rickless thinks the present deduction is “a tall order.” Rickless, *Plato's Forms in Transition*, 123.
 10. For a similar, but drier, criticism of Parmenides, see Aristotle, *Physics*, 186a 22–186b 36.
 11. Plato explicitly makes this attribution at least twice: “Melissus and Parmenides tell us that all things are a unity” (*Theaetetus*, 180e); “The Eleatic set . . . unfold their assumption that what we call ‘all things’ are only one thing” (*Sophist*, 242d). It is obvious that Plato thought Parmenides was a strict, but an inconsistent, monist. The inconsistency is already entailed in the equation of “all things” with “one thing.”
 12. As Proclus aptly comments, we should not “mix up times” when comparing “relative expressions.” Otherwise, we end up comparing two different things, one of which is “present” and the other “gone.” Proclus entertains the possibility that the present argument smacks of sophistry. However, he concludes that Plato is here describing two different senses of being in time: unilinear and eternally circular. In other words, Proclus wrongly thinks “the subject of the discussion [in this argument] is divine souls, which partake in time in the respect that they have a periodic time of their proper motion.” Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, 1226–27.

13. Sayre wants to save Parmenides from the fallacy: "Parmenides does not say literally that there is no way of being except in time." Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 156–57.
14. Cornford thinks "the conclusion itself—that the One can have no sort of being—is sound, and could be deduced from the definition in the first paragraph of the Hypothesis." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 129–30. I disagree. The premise "it does not have any parts" does not necessarily require the conclusion that the *one* "can have no sort of being."
15. According to Plato, Parmenides had claimed that "'Being' is the name of the All" (*Theaetetus*, 180e).
16. That there is an agreement of this kind is more accurately represented in several recent translations and not in the Jowett translation. For instance, see Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 23 and Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 147.
17. According to Meinwald, Parmenides and Aristoteles only reject the fatal conclusion. Meinwald, *Plato's Parmenides*, Ch. 4, also 180, n. 14. Also see Sandra L. Peterson, "Plato's *Parmenides*: A Principle of Interpretation and Seven Arguments," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34, no. 2 (1996): 167–92.
18. Miller, *Plato's Parmenides*, 82. Also see Gill, "Introduction," 75. However, both Miller and Gill attribute the acceptance of the fatal conclusion to the immaturity of Aristoteles, who unwittingly falls into Parmenides's trap. As I argue presently, the trap is set up for the historical Parmenides and his followers.
19. According to Cornford, "by taking the bare 'One,'" Plato has "contrived at once to expose the inconsistency of [the historical] Parmenides and to clear up an ambiguity in his own theory." Cornford thus thinks argument 1 teaches both Parmenides and Plato a lesson: "If Parmenides' One and Socrates' Unity itself (or any other Form) are to be rescued from self-destruction, both must be something more than 'just one and nothing else.'" Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 135. Rickless has a similar evaluation of argument 1 but completely ignores the implications of argument 1 to the doctrine of the historical Parmenides. He thus reasons that argument 1 falsifies only Plato's radical purity theory of Forms. Rickless, *Plato's Forms in Transition*, 137. Sayre rightly rejects the view that argument 1 is about Plato's Forms. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 156–57.
20. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 109.
21. Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 1, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 278–314 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 182b 22–27.
22. In *Sophist*, Plato flatly denies that this condition applies to his Forms: insofar as it is "only itself," the Form of *Being* (and this is true of "all the other kinds" or Forms) "is not myriads upon myriads of things" (259a–b).

23. Cornford thinks Parmenides is here undertaking a Pythagorean exercise, which derives the infinitely many parts from “the One and the Infinite Dyad.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 144. Sayre agrees with Cornford’s comment and thinks that in argument 2, Plato attempts to incorporate the Pythagorean program into his TF. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 168. There is another way to read the implications of the present Pythagorean influences. Plato is showing playfully that Parmenides’s supposition leads to Pythagorean consequences, which would be shocking to the historical Parmenides. At any rate, it will become clear soon enough that Plato cannot possibly be developing a new TF in argument 2.
24. Sayre creatively claims that Parmenides is here using “number” to mean the things (i.e., sticks and stones) we can count and not the things “we count with.” His evidence is that Aristotle, in *Physics* (219b5–7), gives us two different meanings of number, and this makes Parmenides’s present argument fully “intelligible.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 173.
25. According to Allen, Parmenides’s present deductions are of “a highly unfortunate character” because they suggest the divisibility of “the Idea of Unity,” which, as Plato says in *Sophist*, should not be done. Because Allen thinks Plato has Parmenides discuss the Form (Idea) of Unity here, he thinks the argument is absurd. Why would Plato engage in this absurdity? Allen’s answer is that Plato does not expect us to accept the “truth” of the conclusion but wants us to simply “inquire what it assumes.” Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 278ff. Sayre rejects Allen’s interpretation. He claims imaginatively that Parmenides only says Unity “might” have these qualities, and we can know this by moving beyond the “surface level of interpretation.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 176–77. Sayre here inherits Cornford’s way of avoiding the problem at hand. See Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 146–47. I think it is rather clear that argument 2, at least thus far, is not concerned with the Form of Unity.
26. Sayre claims again that he is. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 181. Rickless says the argument here might be false, but what matters is the part that is not false. Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 151.
27. As Cornford notes, this conclusion is only valid in the case of physical things. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 148.
28. Sayre, who asserts that argument 2 is about Forms, actually agrees, but with an excuse: “Like the arguments preceding it . . . this deduction is contextualized, and Plato’s Forms are not part of the present context.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 182.
29. Even though his own translation says, “necessarily always at rest,” Sayre insists, once again, that Parmenides means to say it “might” be at rest. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 183–84.
30. As Cornford reluctantly notes, this conclusion is “embarrassing.” However, Cornford typically engages in a futile effort to help Parmenides. He speculates that Plato means to say, “There is no reason why [the

- one*] should not move.” Then Cornford quickly changes his mind and decides that the problem is too “obvious that we cannot suppose Plato unconscious of it.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 150–53. Others repeat Cornford’s speculation, but not his final verdict. See Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 184 and Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 112.
31. This deliberate exclusion, which is instrumental in creating fallacies, should not be readily excused. Cornford excuses it for the reason that “likeness is separately considered in the next section.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 158.
 32. Charitably, Cornford argues that “this is a valid sense of ‘different from itself,’” and the deduction “should not be dismissed as sophistic.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 158.
 33. Cornford thinks the unity of “the others” is assumed by Parmenides here. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 159.
 34. According to Cornford, Parmenides’s negative definition of the *others* (not ones) abolishes all the differences between them and the *one*, and thus the conclusion that they are the same is at least partially justified. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 162–63.
 35. Cornford still insists that Plato in this section “is not merely indulging in a parade of sophistical arguments.” His reasoning is that Plato “would hardly have been at the pains to construct so intricate a piece of reasoning.” Presumably, this section plays around with “the ambiguities of ‘same’ and ‘different,’ as well as to those of ‘one’ and ‘not one’” and creates “apparent contradictions . . . to puzzle the reader” and “set him thinking out the various senses of” these ambiguous concepts. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 163–64. Sayre, on the other hand, keeps speaking of “certain circumstances” in which the conclusion “might” be plausible. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 193. Allen, for reasons other than mine, thinks “the absurdity of this result is manifest,” for it results in “a proof that the others have no existence, and therefore that Unity [*the one*], since it is the same as the others, [also] has no existence.” Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 289.
 36. Jowett’s translation of these passages is rather unreadable. The conclusion just stated is consistent with other translations. See Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 165 and Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 155.
 37. Once again, I have altered Jowett’s translation significantly here. The alterations accord with several other translations of the same passage. See Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 35; Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 117; and Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 154.
 38. Cornford concedes that this “argument appears to be a puzzle set in order that we may detect fallacies.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 166. Or we may say more accurately that it is a deliberate fallacy Plato produces by using the prized method.

39. Once again, Sayre says "there is a way of reading Parmenides' moves at this point . . . that lends the argument a degree of plausibility." Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 196ff.
40. Cornford says, "The first conclusion is that, if you have one body among other bodies, there is no reason against its being in contact with them." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 168. True, but it should be added that there is also no reason against it being *not* in contact with them.
41. Sayre thinks Parmenides's formula is obviously valid: "When things are brought together in contiguous succession, there is always one fewer contact than things in contact." Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 203.
42. Cornford tries to justify the present conclusion precisely on this ground. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 170–71.
43. Cornford claims, unjustifiably, that Parmenides is here criticizing Socrates's "theory of Forms." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 172–75. Likewise, Miller says the contradictory arguments here are meant to recall Socrates's troubles in part I. Miller, *Plato's Parmenides*, 107. Also see Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides*, 122. Likewise, Sayre says that what we have here is a return to "the early conception of Forms for a second round of attack." Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 207–8. These authors simply cannot bring themselves to accept that the venerable Parmenides is capable of making absurd arguments.
44. Cornford acknowledges that this conclusion follows from Parmenides's argument but suggests for the *n*th time that Plato produced the absurdity as an instructive puzzle for us. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 172.
45. However, Rickless says the entire argument is "plainly valid," and Plato takes it to be "sound." Rickless, *Plato's Form in Transition*, 166–67.
46. Sayre assures us that "all of these results are conditional upon certain assumptions. There is nothing contradictory about one result following under one set of assumptions, and an opposite result following under another set." What, then, is Parmenides's new assumption? Sayre finds an example in Aristotle's *Physics* (IV.3). Parmenides has in mind something like "a *jar-of-wine* as a whole." Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 213. (Aristotle also says in this context that "the jar and the wine in separation are not parts of a whole.") I fail to see how this example of a whole validates Parmenides's conclusion. If we say the jar is larger than the wine, we are necessarily speaking of two separate things, or we are merely comparing one part of the whole to another one of its parts. In short, a jar of wine as a whole is necessarily the same volume as itself.
47. Cornford suggests as a possible answer that the *one* can be more and fewer than itself in the sense that "any limited quantity always contains more possible parts than those into which it is actually divided." If so, the actual *one* can have a fewer or more parts than the possible *one*, and in this sense, it can be more and less than itself. For this reason, both Zeno and Gorgias were wrong to think that the statement is "absurd." Parmenides (Plato) is thus "turning the tables on Zeno"

- here. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 183, 178–81. Cornford's conjecture is deeply problematic. Parmenides says nothing of the possible parts of the *one*. Moreover, since what we are dividing are the parts of the *one*, the possible parts will still be the possible parts of the *one*, as pointed out by Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 297, n. 156.
48. This point is overlooked by Sayre in the following manner: "Parmenides," he says, recalls that "something is older in contrast with something younger." From this, it also follows that "something [is becoming] older in contrast with something becoming younger." Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 222. Cornford, on the other hand, says there is a sense in which the claim makes good sense: "As a man grows older, the baby he once was may be said to become relatively younger. This way of speaking may be unfamiliar, but it is not fallacious." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 186, also 128. Notice how Cornford changed the tense to "he once was," which is not in the text. For another brief (and in my view inconclusive) discussion, see Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 299–300, 242–43.
 49. Aristotle, *Physics*, 239b 30. Zeno's paradox includes a similar conception of space.
 50. Rickless thinks the argument is "plainly valid." He says it is obviously true that "if I come to have gray hair, then I reach a point in time not unreasonably referred to as 'now' . . . [If so,] the process of coming to have gray hair stops and I *now* have gray hair." Rickless adds, without mentioning his hair, that the reverse (being younger) is also obviously true. Rickless, *Plato's Forms in Transition*, 172. By saying (he says this several times) that "the process of coming to have gray hair [now] stops," Rickless repeats the problem inherent in Parmenides's argument and assumes that it is sound.
 51. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 187.
 52. More clearly put, "in connection with number . . . things that are . . . less come to be and have come to be earlier." Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 159.
 53. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 187.
 54. Sayre recognizes that Cornford's brick example cannot accommodate the generalization and proceeds to offer his own way of justifying Parmenides's present argument. He says Parmenides might be referring to the "conceptual" progression of argument 2, which earlier has moved from the *one* to plurality. This interesting conjecture, however, is an inaccurate analogy. Parmenides did not develop his sequence in temporal terms—time was introduced later. In fact, if he were to do what Sayre claims he does, he would have to assume that the *one* initially comes into being, and is thus earlier, without having any *being* and parts, which would contradict hypothesis 2. However, says Sayre, there is a sense in which the words for younger and older in Greek (*neōteros* and *presbuteros*) can have a nontemporal, conceptual meaning in which older comes

after younger. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 228. I think Sayre is trying too hard to justify Parmenides's argument.

55. With Cornford, we may say that the "wall, as the one whole, comes into being when the last brick has been laid, and so [as a whole wall, it] is 'younger' than all its parts." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 188.
56. According to Cornford, the seventh argument can be illustrated and justified by the brick wall example again. "Every brick we add is one brick, and at any stage in the building the part already constructed will be one part, just as every number is one number. Thus at every step from the first unit to the completed whole there will be 'one thing' in existence." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 189. Cornford does not go so far as to draw Parmenides's conclusion from his brick wall example. If he were to do this, he would have to say that none of the steps are older or younger than each other.

On another possible reading of the seventh argument, as Sayre has it, Parmenides assumes that the *one* "enters the scene afresh with each instance of one thing being added to the collection. A consequence is that the one 'arrives' simultaneously with each of the others, and accordingly with all the others." Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 231–32. If the *one* "enters the scene afresh with each" one part, it cannot be said that it enters the scene "with all the others" at once. All that we have the right to say is that each fresh *one* is of the same age as each fresh part.

57. See Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 237.
58. The last statement of the series on time clearly reminds us of this refutation: "Consequently the one was and is and will be, and it was becoming, is becoming, and will become." Cornford draws the same conclusion in this regard: "Parmenides, having denied the possibility of any becoming or change, said of his One Being 'nor was it ever, nor will it be, since it is now [in the present] all at once.'" In short, Parmenides has shown that his "One Being," his own hypothesis, implies the very opposite of what he claims—namely, that it cannot be many and in motion (*contra* also Zeno). Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 193, 192.
59. Generally speaking, "it is openly explained that superficially conflicting statements are made from different points of view." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 192. Somehow, Cornford assumes that having so many "different points of view" of the same subject is a virtue. Sayre repeats Cornford's conclusion by quoting him and adds that a commentator's real task is to work with, and not "against," the text. To Sayre, as he points out, this means forgiving what appear to be "flawed" arguments and "working with" the text to make these arguments intelligible. To be sure, Sayre's ideal commentator must take for granted another assumption. He or she must "proceed under the assumption that the author is not trying to elude understanding." Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 189, 238. Rickless's assessment is less flexible: "Plato takes thirty

- out of thirty-three arguments to be sound." Rickless, *Plato's Forms in Transition*, 185.
60. Cornford adds two conclusions to his interpretation of argument 2, which I find unacceptable. First, "in the earliest stages [of argument 2] the objects of knowledge—Forms and numbers—had their place; and at the end we have the object of perception, the sensible body." If so, argument 2 evolved from Forms to "the sensible body," meaning that Parmenides did not always identify "the One and the Others . . . with Forms." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 192–94. Rickless thinks argument 2 is solely concerned with a new and improved TF, which "luckily" does not rely on the radical purity (RP) theory of Forms. Rickless, *Plato's Forms in Transition*, 183–87. As reported previously, others, such as Sayre and Turnbull, also find a renewed TF in argument 2. Also see G. E. M. Anscombe, "The New Theory of Forms," *The Monist* 50, no. 3 (1966): 403–20.
 61. See Gill, "Introduction," 85; Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy*, 112; Gill, "Introduction," 85; and Rickless, *Plato's Forms in Transition*, 188. Allen thinks it combines the results of arguments 1 and 2 but introduces a third deduction that calls to mind Parmenides's poem. Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 307.
 62. See Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 195; Miller, *Plato's Parmenides*, 115; and Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 240–41. Meinwald rules out the possibility that what we have here is an addition to argument 2. Meinwald, *Plato's Parmenides*, 121.
 63. Here, I use the translation of Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 162–63.
 64. Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 307.
 65. The sentence, he says, "reinforces" his own claim because it says, in effect, that "a thing (say, a human being) gradually degenerates, and, as well, that there may be a gradual integration leading to the coming to be of a thing." Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy*, 115. Turnbull seems to agree with Miller. See Miller, *Plato's Parmenides*, 113. Both Cornford and Sayre abandon the present text and look for Platonic definitions of what is meant here in *Laws* and *Timaeus* (Cornford) and in *Laws* and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Sayre). Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 197–99 and Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 244–45.
 66. As Gill rightly points out, this conclusion offends the law of the excluded middle. However, it is hard to accept Gill's additional claims that Plato intended to solve the "first antinomy" between arguments 1 and 2 and that these dichotomies save the *one* from "violating the Law of Non-Contradiction." Gill, "Introduction," 86. In other words, accepting that the *one* can be both one and many does not violate the said Law, unless one supposes that it is one and many in the very same respect—which is not supposed anywhere.
 67. Sayre also makes this point. However, he claims that Plato is here adopting Eudoxus's theory of irrational numbers, which are "breaks

- along the continuum of rational numbers.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 247–49. It seems that the instant theory actually has something to do with Zeno’s paradoxes. As Cornford rightly points out, the theory of time propounded here is incompatible with Plato’s views and may have something to do with the way Zeno’s opponents had conceived the latter’s theory of motion. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 201–2. However, according to Cherniss, Plato here might be parodying both Zeno and Antiphon, a follower of the Eleatics. Cherniss, “Parmenides and the ‘Parmenides’ of Plato,” 132, n. 35. For an informative discussion that also evaluates different interpretations of Zeno’s relevant paradoxes, see Vlastos, *Studies in Greek Philosophy, Volume 1: The Presocratics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 205–17.
68. Scolnicov thinks this is a conclusion of “the Appendix only, and not of Argument II entire.” Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 138.
 69. Sayre thinks the instant theory belongs to Plato. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 251–53. More plausibly, Cornford says this theory is incompatible with Plato’s views. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 201–2. Rickless also says Plato is “not committed to any of the conclusions derived in the Appendix.” Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 197. However, Rickless assumes wrongly that Parmenides is representing Plato, and for this reason, Parmenides is not committed to these conclusions either. The brief conclusion to the appendix suggests otherwise.
 70. As Cherniss suggests, “there is special sarcasm here in making Zeno’s own method to force the Eleatic theory to depend upon some kind of participation, the very doctrine which Zeno and Parmenides consider inconceivable when Socrates presents it as an element of his theory of Ideas.” Cherniss, “Parmenides and the ‘Parmenides’ of Plato,” 132. I agree with Cherniss’s assessment partially; I am not sure how the Eleatic theory comes to depend on participation. Perhaps Cherniss assumes that Parmenides is made to present another version of the Eleatic doctrine in argument 3.
 71. Cornford defends the contrary view. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 204.
 72. This means that the *one* here is identifiable with what Rickless calls the RP theory of Forms. However, Rickless wrongly claims that Plato in argument 3 derives “a number of sound arguments” without relying upon RP, and shows that “RP must be false.” Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 206. As I read it, argument 3 confirms something like RP and in no way shows RP to be false.
 73. Jowett loosely uses the phrase “participate in the one.” Clearly, the ensuing context makes this use untenable, for nothing participates in the *one*.
 74. I borrowed this quotation from Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 207. Jowett’s translation of it treats the one/whole discussed here as a Form, which is not warranted by the text.

75. Cornford thinks that Parmenides has just defined the *one* and the others in a “very wide and general manner.” Among many other possibilities, he says “the One may be any Platonic Form, the others other Forms, which may or may not be parts of it.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 208. However, as we have seen, Parmenides clearly distinguishes the Form of Unity from the *others*; the *others* are clearly said to be *not* the *one*, and the *one* does not have any parts. Therefore, if the *one* is a Form, then the *others* cannot be Forms.
76. Cornford, however, claims that “new light” has been thrown onto the theory of Forms in the “passage about the Unlimited.” Plato here “restores the primitive Pythagorean conception of the Limit and the Unlimited as the two chief opposites that combine to constitute Forms, numbers, geometrical magnitudes, and sensible things.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 212–13. Cornford simply assures us that *Philebus* sheds “further light” on his claim. Sayre repeats a similar argument. He constantly refers to how the *one* (Unity) of argument 3 “is predicated of the Great and (the) Small as the cause of Forms, and the Forms are predicated of the Great and (the) Small as the cause of sensible things.” Sayre imports this interpretation largely from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and claims that the same argument is made in *Philebus*. Moreover, Sayre thinks arguments 2 and 3 are very compatible, which, as we have seen, is clearly not the case. Sayre, Parmenides’ *Lesson*, 271–84.
77. According to Allen, the participation of the *one* in the *others*, discussed in argument 3, “implies that Ideas must be in their parts in whole or in part.” Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 312–13. Miller rightly objects to Allen’s assumption by pointing out that the *one* of H3 is not conceived as a divisible whole and that argument 3 is not built on this dilemma at all. However, Miller adds the misleading claim that this argument points toward “overcoming” the dilemma. Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 256–57, n. 2. I argue that it does nothing of the sort, since it makes the dilemma unnecessary.
78. The wording of the text here suggests that the hypothesis now is “if *one* is.” However, the description of the subject of the hypothesis in the ensuing deductions of Parmenides justifies the use of “if the *one* is.” Besides, in most of the arguments, an effort is made to distinguish the *one* from oneness and from the numerical one, which makes it necessary to retain “*the one*.” Lastly, since we are always speaking of the *one* Parmenides is supposing, we are compelled to refer to it as *the one*. Switching back and forth between “*one* is” and “*the one* is” would make for an awkward reading. The best strategy, I believe, is to use “*the one*” while discerning the meaning it acquires throughout each argument.
79. See also Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 137.
80. By Parmenides’s own account, given at 151b, it is indeed possible for the *one* to be *in* the others, or vice versa. Cornford notices this in a footnote but does not problematize it. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*,

- 214, n. 1. Allen also notices this discrepancy but states unclearly that the conclusion drawn here “follows from 139a–b” instead of the claim made in 151b. Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 320. This is bad reasoning on Allen’s part. The conclusion drawn at 139a–b is that the *one* cannot be in itself or in anything else, for both conditions would require a condition of plurality (the container and the contained). The premise of the conclusion given at 139a–b is that plurality cannot be at all. The premise of the conclusion drawn here in argument 4 is that there are the *one* and the *others*, which, as so named, encompass every possible thing.
81. Cornford insists on treating argument 4 as a “criticism” of Socrates’s denial of participation. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 217. Also see Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 137; Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 298; and Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato’s Late Philosophy*, 122. Rickless thinks, once again, that argument 4 shows how Socrates’s radical purity theory leads to “absurdity.” Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 211.
 82. A similar claim is made by Miller, who says that argument 4 “contains the elements of a cogent *reductio*; and construed that way, it serves to ground and confirm the basic points of” argument 3. Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 138–39.
 83. Gill reasons similarly that “by arguing that the others cannot partake of the one without fragmenting it into many,” argument 4 undermines the deductions of argument 3. Gill, “Introduction,” 91. Allen, on the other hand, thinks argument 3 “proved that Unity, as an Idea, can be participated in by things other than Unity. But if Unity excludes plurality [argument 4], it cannot be participated in.” Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 320. Allen’s argument is based on a serious misunderstanding. As we have seen, the *one* of H3 is the Unity itself, which is explicitly defined as *not having* any parts or extra attributes. Moreover, it is not the case that the *others* participate in the *one* of argument 3. Yet Parmenides has assumed in argument 3, not implausibly, that such a *one* is capable of participating in the *others*. Also, the main problematic of argument 4 is not the participation of the *others* in the *one* but the inability of the *one* to participate in the *others*.
 84. If the emendation is made, the conclusion would read, “If the *one* is, it is both all things and nothing whatsoever, alike with reference to itself and to the others and likewise, the others” (or “the others in the same way”). In this way, the statement is made to include the general results of all four arguments. For a discussion, see Gill, “Introduction,” 92–93 and Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato’s Late Philosophy*, 123. Gill thinks the emendation is unwarranted; the statement simply concludes arguments 1 and 2.
 85. Since he thinks the conclusion does not entail any real “contradictions,” Cornford refers to it as the “ostensible conclusion of Hypotheses I–IV.” He claims that Plato had to state the conclusion in the way he did so that he could continue to “disguise” the ambiguities involved in the

- meaning of the *one*. "As soon as" we realize that the *one* is given different "definitions," we come to realize that "the conclusions of all four Hypotheses are sound and consistent with one another." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 217. Similarly, Sayre thinks that "once it is realized the results of these four hypotheses are logically independent . . . the appearance of contradiction in this summary should vanish entirely." Thus the summary is merely a summary of the conclusions of all arguments. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 299.
86. Allen calls the conclusion a "cumulative absurdity." His assumption is that all four arguments have the same subject, and for this reason, the conclusion entails contradictions. Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 322–23. Also see Miller, *Plato's Parmenides*, 228, n. 8.
 87. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 230.
 88. Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and the Sophist* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935), 115.
 89. For various interpretations, see Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 219; Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 329–30; Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 352, n. 40; Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides*, 149; and Rickless, *Plato's Forms in Transition*, 212.
 90. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 220.
 91. Scolnicov thinks this premature predication is only a "provisional measure" to be explained later. Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides*, 149.
 92. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 222. Cornford's translation is strongly interpretative. Sayre also reads the current passage as saying, "while the one is not able to be, if it does not exist, nothing prevents it from partaking of (*metechein*) other things." Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 256. Allen's translation reflects the ambiguity of the text: "It is not possible for unity to be, since it is not." Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 56. Gill translates it as, "The one can't be, if in fact it is not." Gill, "Introduction," 169. Scolnicov's translation, like that of Jowett, says, "The one cannot have being (*εἶναι*), if indeed it is not." However, Scolnicov also misses the fallacy. According to him, the "hypothesis the one is not (*F*)" can mean it is "*G, H, J*. In fact, it *must* be *G*, or *H*, or *J*." Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides*, 150. But, we may point out, if the *one* "*must* be *G*, or *H*, or *J*," then it must have *being*. Yet the definition says it "cannot have being."
 93. Cornford thinks he clarifies what is meant with the following statement but really repeats the ambiguity. By definition, he says, two things are unlike each other "when any statement true of the one is not true of the other." Thus "it follows that our non-existent entity has unlikeness to other things (whether existent or not). The One is *this* one; the Others are not this one, but other ones; so something is true of the One which is not true of them." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 223.
 94. As Cornford notes, the statement "the one is like itself" necessarily assumes that the *one* "has a positive character of its own." Cornford,

- Plato and Parmenides*, 223. Scolnicov also acknowledges that being like itself requires the *one* to have a positive attribute: "In that very respect in which the one is unlike the others (say, in being *G* while the others are *H*, *J*, etc.), the one is like itself." Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides*, 151.
95. Plato attributes this very argument to Protagoras in *Theaetetus* (159b–c).
 96. Scolnicov reads this deduction as saying the *one* cannot be equal to the others because "if it were, it would be (the others)" in the respect of equality. Scolnicov thus focuses on the second implication only and overlooks the first. However, both implications are clearly marked even in Scolnicov's translation of the deduction, which renders it as saying, "For if it were equal, it at once would both be, and be like them in respect of equality." Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides*, 151.
 97. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 224.
 98. As Robinson states, the "fallacy" is that the "considerations which prove, if anything, that the One is neither equal nor unequal are used to prove that it is not equal and therefore unequal." Robinson, "Plato's *Parmenides* II," 165. Others notice the present fallacy too but think there is some valid explanation for it. For instance, Cornford says we are not "entitled to assert" categorically that the others must be unequal to the *one* on the ground that it is not equal. Yet he says the inference is only a "superficial fallacy." Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 224. Allen notices this "strange" conclusion too. It is even stranger because "*Parmenides*, after all, is capable of distinguishing the two, for he did so at 140b–d." Allen gives an interesting justification for the inference, which I find to be unconvincing. Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 331–32. Sayre says the deduction is "tricky" and gives a justification similar to that of Allen. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 259.
 99. Cornford reluctantly acknowledges this problem. However, instead of treating the present argument as a threat to the integrity of the previous arguments, he simply states that "equality to 'the Others' . . . is not expressly mentioned" in this context. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 225.
 100. Miller, *Plato's Parmenides*, 144.
 101. Even though his own translation of this passage says, "It must be in the state we say it is," and what we say is "the truth," Sayre insists that *Parmenides* is actually saying that "we are not, of course *affirming* that what [is said] is true." Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 260.
 102. According to Cornford, *Parmenides* is saying the following: The *one* we are speaking of is a nonexistent entity. If so, (1) "if it is not to exist, it must have the fact of *being* nonexistence to secure its nonexistence." What makes it a nonexistent entity is the fact that it *is* nonexistent. On the other hand, (2) "the existent must have the 'being' implied in 'being existent' and the 'not-being' implied in 'not being nonexistent,' if it is to have complete existence." If Cornford's translation is correct, I think *Parmenides* means to say that an existent thing *is* an

- existent thing and *is not* a nonexistent thing. In conclusion, “since the existent has not-being and the nonexistent has being, the one also, since it does not exist, must have being in order to be non-existent.” It follows from this that “the one has being, if it is *nonexistent*.” But, adds Parmenides, it “also” follows from the previous deduction that “since it is *not* existent,” the *one* “has not being.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 226. Even though Cornford finds “lucidity” here, the last few touches of this obscure reasoning are particularly problematic. As Allen points out, “we can scarcely claim that what is, is not on the ground that what is exists but does not have being.” Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 334. Since Parmenides has equated the double negative of “not-*being*” and “not-existent” with “not-*being*,” Allen’s objection is understandable. Also, while the statement “The one has being, if it is [a] *nonexistent* [entity]” can be justified, the last claim, “since it is [a] *not* existent [entity],” the *one* “has not being,” is hard to justify. The conclusion is either fallacious or in need of serious clarification. Runciman, for instance, states that “the confusion about nonexistence seems blatant” in argument 5. Runciman, “Plato’s *Parmenides*,” 180. But Runciman thinks Plato is proposing his own theory here and is not aware of the problems he creates. According to Robinson, Plato must have been aware of the fallacies entailed in the present argument. Robinson, “Plato’s *Parmenides* II,” 162–66. More recently, Gill points out that the problems associated with this passage stem from confusion between the different senses of predication. However, Gill strangely thinks the moral of this argument is that Socrates should figure out what a relation, or predication, entails before he posits a theory of Forms. Gill, “Introduction,” 94–99. I fail to see how the text implicates, and indicts, Socrates in the present arguments.
103. Cornford also notices this fallacy but cannot believe that Plato would obliterate the “fine distinction” he has drawn in this context. Thus, reasons Cornford, the present argument “seems to be an appendix” on the theme explored in the appendix. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 227. Sayre thinks Cornford’s worries are unfounded and that Parmenides means the *one* is “subject to change [including motion] with regard to how it is known.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 264.
104. Several other translations, especially Cornford’s, also suggest the existential reading: “If the one is not anywhere in the world of existence—and it is not, if it does not exist—it cannot shift from one place to another.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 228. “Furthermore, if it is nowhere among things that are—as it is, since it is not—it would not shift from this place to that.” Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 58. Both the contrast with “things that are” and the reference to “not shifting in place” suggest the existential reading. This is likewise the case with the following translation: “Yet, on the other hand, if it is nowhere among the things that are—as it isn’t, if in fact it is not—it could not travel

- from one place to another.” Gill and Ryan, *Parmenides*, 171. The following two translations are somewhat more ambiguous in this regard: “However, if in no way it is one of the things that are, as it is indeed not if it is not, it would also not shift from here to here.” Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 155. “But if it is nowhere among the beings, as it is (since it is not), it cannot shift about from here to here.” Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato’s Late Philosophy*, 131.
105. Another translation reads, “And, surely, the one isn’t altered from itself either, whether as something that is or as something that it is not. For the argument would no longer be about the one, but about something else, if in fact the one were altered from itself.” Gill and Ryan, *Parmenides*, 171.
 106. Cornford thinks “these conclusions are sound.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 229. According to Sayre, the present argument says, “If the subject of the hypothesis were to alter in character, it no longer would be the one of this particular hypothesis, and our discussion would be about something else instead. Since the current discussion in fact concerns that one, its subject cannot alter while the discussion is underway.” Hence the argument is “immediately intelligible.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 265–66. I think Sayre adds intelligibility to the argument by modifying its reasoning. Parmenides has said nothing about the dependence of his claim on the duration of the argument. He has said instead that the subject, the *one*, cannot “alter from itself” at all. Thus it is not implied that we can alter the meaning in another discussion. To quote Sayre’s own translation of another relevant passage (161e), the *one* “must be in the state we say it is; for if it were not in that state, we could not be speaking the truth.”
 107. However, Sayre finds “nonspatiotemporal . . . features available to Plato’s Forms” in argument 5, which Plato makes use of in *Sophist* and elsewhere. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 268–70. Rickless thinks Plato takes all the arguments of argument 5 “to be sound.” The overall result, once again, is that Plato thinks the radical purity theory of Forms is false. Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 222–23.
 108. This point comes across even more sharply in another translation of the same passage: “Let’s go back again to see whether things will appear the same to us as they do now [at the close of argument 5], or different [in what follows].” Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 172.
 109. Cornford thinks, in this argument, Parmenides (“Plato”) “reinforces conclusions reached in the last.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 231.
 110. By claiming that Parmenides’s reminder of their previous agreement refers to a passage at 156a, Cornford tries to avoid the fact that Parmenides is here contradicting the deductions of argument 5. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 232, n. 2.
 111. Miller agrees with my conclusion but burdens argument 6 with the view that the “critical hearer” would conclude that the contradiction

- is superficial and that Parmenides really suggests the necessity of the *eidetic one*. Miller, *Plato's Parmenides*, 155–59.
112. Many scholars *wrongly* think that Plato, here and in *Sophist*, approves of the Parmenidean doctrine as it is expressed in argument 6. For instance, according to Cornford, “in the *Sophist* (237b ff.), the Eleatic Stranger confirms that description of nonentity or the totally unreal, in agreement with the present Hypothesis”—that is, the hypothesis of argument 6. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 234. Turnbull presents a similar view: “Supposition six makes it clear that [the historical] Parmenides did well to warn his followers . . . against allowing that not-being in any way *is*.” However, Turnbull oddly shies away from adding that Plato in *Sophist* affirms Parmenides’s warning. Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy*, 135.
 113. Rickless once again claims that argument 6 falsifies the RP theory of Socrates. Rickless, *Plato's Forms in Transition*, 226–28. His unjustifiable assumption is that RP signifies the same meaning Parmenides gave to *is not* in argument 6.
 114. This obvious relationship of argument 7 to *Theaetetus* has been scarcely noted. One exception is Coxon. He correctly observes that Plato in argument 7 examines “a world without unity but with the appearance of [unity],” and he reformulates this world in *Theaetetus* on the basis of “Protagoras’ relativism as presupposing that nothing is one in itself.” Coxon, *The Philosophy of Forms*, 162, also 165.
 115. Cornford claims that, because of “this shift of emphasis” to the consideration of the *others*, the meaning of the “negative supposition,” the one is not, is necessarily different from the suppositions of arguments 5 and 6. Now “we are supposing the absence of unity from some other element which might possess unity, but is to be conceived as not possessing it.” In other words, “we” are supposing not the absence of *the one* but the possible absence of *oneness* (“unity”) in things other than *the one*. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 234. However, as we will see, Parmenides is actually supposing the absence of the *one* also.
 116. See also Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 338.
 117. Cornford asserts that Parmenides is here repeating the view of “the unlimited” found in *Philebus* at 24. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 236. As Allen rightly points out, “the continua of the *Philebus* are qualitatively, though not quantitatively, limited.” Allen, *Plato's Parmenides*, 338.
 118. I have reorganized Parmenides’s thought here. In the text, the contraries are presented in a disorderly manner.
 119. Here, Parmenides also says, since each part is not really one, the *others* will be many. The Gill and Ryan translation also reads, “There will seem to be a number of them, if in fact each seems to be one, although being many.” Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 173. Likewise, Allen’s translation reads, “Since they are many, there will seem to be a number

- of them.” Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 62. However, it is clear from the general context that they only appear to be many.
120. The last sentence just quoted is from Gill and Ryan, *Plato: Parmenides*, 174.
 121. Both Gill and Scolnicov take the distance analogy to be a reference to one’s vantage point. The former says “what you see depends on your perspective,” and the latter says, “Depending on one’s vantage point of view, each of the many will seem unlimited and limited, and one and many.” Gill, “Introduction,” 103 and Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 162. This is a keen observation on their part, but neither author mentions Protagoras in this context. Even though he does not mention Protagoras, Miller comes very close to my interpretation when he points out that each perspective, which results in “each attribution [of appearance,] pertains to a separate experience—indeed, a separate and distinct sense-perception.” Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 271–72, n. 55.
 122. According to Cornford, argument 7 succeeds in showing how “even if there were no ‘one thing’ in existence, plurality will still be conceivable.” Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 241. Scolnicov repeats Cornford’s assessment but adds a proviso to it: “Argument VII established the conditions of discourse about a world in which no mention is made of anything that can be truly said to be this or that . . . Such a . . . world is not impossible. But [and this is the proviso] its deficiencies are also pointed out: in such a world there could be no true predication.” Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 162. The proviso, I claim, is the point of argument 7. Rickless calls this argument “strange” because it shifts from *is* to *appears*. However, he concludes that “Plato managed to show, without reliance on RP, that if the one is not, then the others are.” Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition*, 236. He thus takes the inconvenient strangeness out of argument 7 by ignoring most of the argument in which Parmenides shifts from “the others are” to they *appear* to be so-and-so. Sayre manages to make argument 7 the corollary of argument 3, which seem to me to be making different arguments. He thinks this is so, provided that we make “allowances for the qualification of the result of H7 in terms of appearances.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 292. If we make these allowances, argument 7 becomes another argument. Turnbull thinks argument 7 highlights a problem from which Socrates must learn that sentences with “both terms negative . . . have no truth value.” Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato’s Late Philosophy*, 137. Even though Turnbull has a section on *Theaetetus* at the end of his book, he shows no interest in the obvious connection between argument 7 and this dialogue. As I mentioned earlier, scholars of *Parmenides* generally ignore this glaring connection.
 123. The contradiction under scrutiny here is accurately noted by Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 338 and Gill, “Introduction,” 103. Cornford predictably thinks otherwise. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 241. His aim is

- to avoid the unavoidable, which is that argument 8 contradicts the conclusion of H7. Miller, also predictably, thinks the contradiction appears only on the “surface.” Even though Parmenides contradicts “every positive claim” made in argument 7, the “critical hearer” should conclude that there are “at least appearances” and thus accept the result of H7. Miller, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 165–67. According to Scolnicov, whereas argument 7 supposed an “indeterminate one,” argument 8 “totally negates the one.” Scolnicov, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 163. As we have seen, especially at 164c, it is clear that argument 7 did not “suppose” an “indeterminate one,” but the *one* that is “nothing,” a supposition that led to the conclusion that the *others* appear as ones in a dreamlike state.
124. I fail to see how argument 8 “undercuts” the “theory of Forms articulated by Socrates in the middle dialogues” as Sayre maintains. Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 303.
 125. I have significantly modified the first part of Jowett’s translation of this passage.
 126. However, Gill thinks argument 8 is *the* lesson of *Parmenides*. Gill, “Introduction,” 104.
 127. Cornford says this “confession of failure” is only “ostensible.” Plato meant for us to discover the real conclusion ourselves. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 245. This view is repeated by numerous other scholars, who refuse to believe that Plato meant for the exercise to fail.
 128. Sayre says it is no more than a “recapitulation.” Sayre, *Parmenides’ Lesson*, 304.
 129. For Allen, the purpose of all this is to create a general *aporia* and to force the reader to reflect on the premises that made this possible. Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides*, 338.

CHAPTER 4

1. This view has been defended by several influential revisionists in the past. For instance, according to Gilbert Ryle, Plato in *Parmenides* “overtly” demonstrates the “untenability of the very principles” of his philosophy. For this reason, in his later dialogues, he only “attends the theory of [Forms] on occasions, but he does so in a dispassionate and critical way.” Ryle adds that, beginning with *Parmenides*, Plato had discovered “that certain important philosophic truths and methods were to be credited not to Socrates but to the Eleatics. [Henceforth,] Zeno is the teacher and not Socrates.” Ryle does not really bother to demonstrate these fantastic claims. His evidence is mainly that Taylor contradicts himself on this matter, and Plato, in *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, “goes out of his way to express his admiration for [Parmenides].” Gilbert Ryle, “Plato’s *Parmenides*,” in *Studies in Plato’s Metaphysics*, ed. Reginald E. Allen, 97–147 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 133–34, 98.

Similarly, Richard Robinson claims that, beginning with *Parmenides*, Plato still “thought he believed” in the theory of Forms, “though in his active inquiries he was in fact beyond it, and [the theory of Forms] functioned as theory to be criticized instead of as the rock of salvation that it had been in in his middle period.” Without any evidence (except that Cornford is wrong), Robinson asserts the following: “It is the fact that in *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, *Statesman* and *Philebus*, the only *obvious* references to the theory of Forms as found in the middle dialogues are the acute objections offered to it in the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*.” Richard Robinson, “Forms and Error in Plato’s *Theaetetus*,” *Philosophical Review* 59, no. 1 (1950): 18–19.

According to Gwilym E. L. Owen, “The [middle-period] project was abandoned from dissatisfaction with certain basic theories.” In *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus*, which are presumably the first self-critical dialogues, Plato makes a “fresh start on problems still unsolved.” This revisionist view came under serious attack—on the ground that a late dialogue, *Timaeus*, retains the middle-period TF pretty much intact. Owen responded by revising the chronology of Plato’s dialogues. *Timaeus*, he claims in an influential article, belongs to “the Republic group”—that is, to the pre-*Parmenides*, middle-period dialogues. Gwilym E. L. Owen, “The Place of *Timaeus* in Plato’s Dialogues,” in *Studies in Plato’s Metaphysics*, ed. Reginald E. Allen, 313–38 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 316. However, Harold F. Cherniss has convincingly argued that *Timaeus* is a late dialogue. Harold F. Cherniss, “The Relation of *Timaeus* to Plato’s Later Dialogues,” in *Studies in Plato’s Metaphysics*, ed. Reginald E. Allen, 339–78 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965).

David Bostock offers a milder version of the revisionist claim. He thinks Plato seriously doubts his middle-period TF in *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus* but recovers from this “skepticism” in *Sophist* and the other late dialogues. David Bostock, *Plato’s Theaetetus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 13–14. As we are about to see, there is no Platonic skepticism in *Theaetetus*, which is basically a criticism of non-Platonic theories of knowledge.

2. Cornford mentions the Pythagorean shift, presumably initiated in argument 2, and ends his book by reiterating this crucial point in a rather nonchalant manner. Francis M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides: Parmenides’ Way of Truth and Plato’s Parmenides* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1939), 245. Others defend stronger versions of the turning point. Rickless, for instance, asserts that a revised, improved theory of Forms “issues from the *Parmenides*,” and this theory is further developed in Plato’s late dialogues (Rickless emphasizes *Sophist*). Samuel C. Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition: A Reading of the Parmenides* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 240–50. Rickless basically takes this assertion as self-evident.

To his credit, Sayre offers one of the most substantial defenses of the turning-point view. By actually examining Plato's late dialogues, Sayre argues that the TF proposed in *Sophist*, and the other late dialogues, "differs in . . . fundamental respects from the theory" found in Plato's "middle dialogues." In the earlier dialogues, "Forms are absolute, both in the sense of being themselves incomposite and in the sense of not depending for what they are upon other things. This character of the Forms is severely compromised as early as the *Sophist*, where Forms are seen to combine with other Forms, and hence to depend on each other for being what they are." Kenneth M. Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (Las Vegas, NV: Parmenides, 2005), 183–84. As we will see later in this chapter, what Sayre says here cannot be substantiated. However, he thinks Plato more fully implements the Pythagorean program, which he allegedly develops in *Parmenides*, in *Philebus*, and not in *Sophist*. As Turnbull points out, Sayre's reading of *Parmenides* is "largely anticipatory of his interpretation of the *Philebus*." Turnbull thinks Sayre "correctly . . . takes the *Philebus* to be a clear declaration of Plato's Pythagoreanism." Robert G. Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1998), 194.

In my view, both Sayre and Turnbull fail to demonstrate the claim that Plato, in *Parmenides*, gives Pythagorean characteristics to his Forms mainly because this does not at all happen in *Parmenides*. For this reason, even if Plato shifts to a Pythagorean TF in *Philebus*, it cannot be said that this shift is initiated in *Parmenides*. Moreover, the "if" here is a very big "if." Socrates (Plato) says in *Philebus* that each Form is "always the same and subject to neither generation nor destruction." A Form's participation in many things does not tear it into many "pieces" (15a–c). Plato, *Philebus*, in *Plato's Examination of Pleasure: A Translation of the Philebus*, trans. Robert Hackworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945). For a convincing defense of this view, see Cynthia Hampton, *Pleasure, Knowledge, and Being: An Analysis of Plato's Philebus* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990). Shorey also flatly rejects the view that Plato, in a Pythagorean manner, treats Ideas as numbers. Paul Shorey, *What Plato Said* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 268.

3. Plausibly, as Taylor suggests, these three dialogues indicate Plato's growing "interest . . . to define his attitude towards the Megarian developments of Eleaticism." Alfred E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (New York: Methuen, 1926), 321.
4. According to Cornford, there is more to *Theaetetus* than meets the eye: "Forms are excluded in order that we may see how we can get on without them; and the negative conclusion of the whole discussion [on the theory of knowledge] means that . . . without [Forms] there is no knowledge at all." Thus, he claims, the implicit idea of *Theaetetus* is consistent with what "Plato had taught ever since the discovery of

- Forms.” Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and the Sophist* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935), 28. For a similar argument, see William D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 101–3.
5. As Shorey briefly puts it, the criticism of Friends “has been mistakenly supposed to mark a revolution in Plato's later philosophy.” Shorey, *What Plato Said*, 254.
 6. All quotations from *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* are from Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and the Sophist*. I have also consulted the following texts, which contain translations of either *Theaetetus* or *Sophist*: John McDowell, *Plato: Theaetetus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973); Myles Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1990); Seth Benardete, *Plato's Sophist: Part II of Being of the Beautiful* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984); Nicholas P. White, *Plato: Sophist* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1993); James Duerlinger, *Plato's Sophist: A Translation with a Detailed Account of Its Theses and Arguments* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005); and Timothy Chappell, *Reading Plato's Theaetetus* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2005).
 7. For a useful discussion, see Giovanni Reale, *The Systems of the Hellenistic Age*, trans. John R. Catan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 45–54.
 8. Cornford reasons that what Euclides narrates is an “imaginary conversation.” See Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 17.
 9. The description of Socrates's profession reminds us of the theory of anamnesis (recollection), which we find, for instance, in *Meno* and *Phaedo*. However, *Theaetetus* does not explicitly mention this theory. It is claimed, *pace* Cornford, that Plato says “nothing at all about the doctrine of recollection” in *Theaetetus*. Chappell, *Reading Plato's Theaetetus*, 21. However, to be fair, Cornford also says there is “no mention of that peculiar impersonal memory of knowledge possessed before birth.” Cornford's ultimate verdict is that “there is no ground for supposing that Plato ever abandoned the theory of Anamnesis.” Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 28. For a very interesting discussion, see Norman Gulley, “Plato's Theory of Recollection,” *The Classical Quarterly* 4, nos. 3–4 (1954): 194–213.
 10. For a similar interpretation, see Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work*, 326. Cornford denies this interpretation on the ground that the phrase “the same wind” implies that Protagoras accepts the objective reality of the wind. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 34, n. 1. Cornford's assertion is invalidated by Socrates's treatment of Protagoras's theory throughout *Theaetetus*. It is also of some philosophical interest that Bishop Berkeley had discovered a prototype of his own philosophy in *Theaetetus*. George Berkeley, *Siris: A Chain of Philosophical Reflexions and Inquiries Concerning the Virtues of Tar Water* (Dublin: W. Innys

- and C. Hitch, 1744), 347–49. Berkeley wrongly thought that Plato accepted the theory he attributes to Protagoras.
11. As we have seen, Socrates points out in *Parmenides* that the same sensible thing is *obviously* both like and unlike and both one and many. In *Philebus*, a late dialogue by all accounts, Protarchus says, “Though I am one human being, [I] am nevertheless many Protarchuses of opposite kinds.” I am made “to be both tall and short, both heavy and light,” and so on, even though “I am always the same person.” Repeating what he says in *Parmenides*, Socrates tells Protarchus that such obvious arguments are “childish” (14c–d). The upshot is that Protagoras’s view denies even the obvious. For him, Socrates is never the same person.
 12. Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, 14.
 13. Cornford wrongly thinks the objection is only valid against Theaetetus, but not Protagoras. Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 67, n. 1. More important, he misses the obvious fallacy entailed in Socrates’s objection.
 14. Plato makes Protagoras say the following in *Protagoras*: “My claim is that I am . . . better than anyone else at helping a man to acquire a good and noble character, worthy indeed of the fee which I charge and even more, as my pupils themselves agree. On this account I have adopted the following method of assessing my payment. Anyone who comes to learn from me may either pay the fee I ask for or, if he prefers, go to a temple, state on oath what he believes to be the worth of my instruction, and deposit that amount” (165d–e). Plato, *Protagoras*, in *Protagoras and Meno*, trans. William K. C. Guthrie (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1956).
 15. McDowell, *Plato: Theaetetus*, 165. According to Cornford, Protagoras’s defense is justified: “If the subject, as well as the object, is perpetually changing, objections which turn upon the *same* person knowing and not knowing the *same* thing fall to the ground.” Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 69–70. Cornford does not realize that, as we are about to see, Protagoras’s entire argument also falls to the ground for the same reason.
 16. I borrow the expression from Shorey, *What Plato Said*, 226, 230, which was apparently invented by Sextus Empiricus in a comment about the present passage.
 17. Protagoras says all individuals are infallible, yet he charges money to teach them wisdom. Thus his actions contradict his views. Moreover, he says that all we say is true, even though it is obvious that most people think Protagoras is wrong. If most people hold the contrary view, either they or Protagoras must be holding a false view. In short, Socrates argues all along that the “measure” principle is faulty and that falsehood must be possible, though the definition of falsehood is not provided in *Theaetetus* (169d–179c).
 18. At this point, Socrates remembers the Eleatic school, “which teaches just the opposite, that reality” is only one and that it does not change.

This school also claims that Being “is the name of the All” (*Theaetetus*, 180d–e). As we will see later on, Plato argues in *Sophist* that this Eleatic statement is self-contradictory and leads to innumerable absurdities. Moreover, “just the opposite” teaching of the Eleatics refers to the fact that they do not accept the existence of any motion or difference. This teaching also leads to unacceptable consequences.

19. This was shown in Chapter 1. Plato defends a very similar argument in *Cratylus* at 440a–c.
20. The Cornford translation uses “existence” instead of *being*. Socrates’s assumption would be fallacious if he were to maintain that *existence belongs to everything*. Moreover, even according to Cornford’s translation, Theaetetus’s response to Socrates’s question indicates that the question is about “being.” Indeed, several other reputable translations use “being” instead of “existence” in the present context. See, for instance, M. J. Levett’s translation in Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, 317 and Chappell’s translation in Chappell, *Reading Plato’s Theaetetus*, 143.
21. Bostock, *Plato’s Theaetetus*, 110. For different interpretations, see Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 108; Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, 59; and Chappell, *Reading Plato’s Theaetetus*, 146.
22. McDowell, *Plato’s Theaetetus*, 193. For a justified criticism of McDowell, see Chappell, *Reading Plato’s Theaetetus*, 148.
23. In *Phaedo*, Socrates tells us that Forms supply the “real nature [*being* or *essence*] of any given thing—what it actually is,” and such an essence is to be grasped through pure thought, without the hindrance of perception (65d–66a). In *Republic*, he tells us that the “being of a bed” derives from the Form of Bed (596a–597a). One way or another—and Plato does not ever offer a single way—true knowledge depends on making a purely mental connection between the *being* of each thing and its relevant Form. Relatedly, in *Parmenides*, Socrates draws a distinction between “the objects we apprehend in reflection [i.e., Forms],” and “the things we see [i.e., perceive]” (129b–130a). As we have seen, Socrates also draws the same distinction in *Theaetetus* (186b–187b). All these connections recommend the conclusion that Socrates’s last argument can be squared with Plato’s TF.
24. According to Cornford, after having read *Theaetetus*, “The Platonist will draw the [following] necessary inference. True knowledge has for its object things of a different order—not sensible things, but intelligible Forms and truths about them . . . The *Theaetetus* leads to this old conclusion by demonstrating the failure of all [alternative] attempts to extract knowledge from sensible objects.” Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 162–63. It is certainly true that, in *Theaetetus*, Plato attempts to show how other attempts to define knowledge necessarily fail. Furthermore, Plato has stated that knowledge has for its object the *being* of things, which is “of a different order” than the things

we merely perceive. Ryle famously remarks that Cornford is mistaken, for *Theaetetus* is only concerned with the question of “What is it to know” and not with the question of “What is known?”—that is, not with the objects of knowledge. Had Cornford realized this simple point, he would have saved himself from making such an embarrassing comment. Gilbert Ryle, “Logical Atomism in Plato’s *Theaetetus*,” *Phronesis* 35 (1990): 22–23. As Chappell rightly points out, Ryle misinterprets Cornford, who is simply arguing that “the two questions are connected.” Chappell, *Reading Plato’s Theaetetus*, 38. In fact, I argue, all the theories Plato investigates in *Theaetetus* consider both questions. Even if Plato does not explicitly link this argument to the TF in *Theaetetus*, the claim that the two are connected in this dialogue is quite plausible. McDowell rejects Cornford’s thesis on the ground that “it is hard to see how Plato could have supposed, as Cornford’s thesis would imply, that a restatement of the Theory of Forms would solve all these problems [identified in *Theaetetus*] at a stroke.” McDowell, *Plato: Theaetetus*, 257–58. Even though he is more sympathetic to Cornford’s interpretation than is McDowell, Chappell, in an effort to find the truth in middle, offers a similar criticism of Cornford and the Unitarians in general. Chappell, *Reading Plato’s Theaetetus*, 23. I think McDowell is too demanding. Actually, Cornford’s thesis does not at all imply that “a restatement of the Theory of Forms would solve all these problems,” not to mention solving them “at a stroke.” Cornford rightly claims that Plato’s main task in this dialogue is to dismiss the existing theories of knowledge. As Gulley also observes, Plato’s attempt to define knowledge “breaks down” because he deliberately excludes discussing “Forms as the objects of knowledge.” More interestingly, as both Cornford and Gulley rightly conclude, problem solving begins, but is not finalized, in *Sophist*. Norman Gulley, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge* (London: Methuen, 1962), 103.

25. For a useful discussion of the digression and various interpretations of it, see Chappell, *Reading Plato’s Theaetetus*, 126–28.
26. For interesting and informative discussions, see Richard S. Bluck, *Plato’s Sophist: A Commentary* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975), Ch. 1; Noburu Notomi, *The Unity of Plato’s Sophist: Between the Sophist and the Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Ch. 3; and Duerlinger, *Plato’s Sophist*, 16–24.
27. In *Cratylus*, Plato attributes a very similar claim to Cratylus (429d–430e).
28. Cornford insists that Plato is “confirming” Parmenides’s doctrine. Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 203. Findlay also proposes this view. John N. Findlay, *Plato: The Written and Unwritten Doctrines* (New York: Routledge, 1974), 260.
29. As Arthur L. Peck bluntly points out, “Plato is condemning, not endorsing, Parmenides.” Arthur L. Peck, “Plato and the ΜΕΓΙΣΤΑ ΓΕΝΗ of the Sophist: A Reinterpretation,” *The Classical Quarterly* 2, nos. 1–2

- (1952): 32–56. Notomi more precisely states, “Accordingly, the difficulty [or, rather, impossibility] concerning what is not arises *if* we assume that the Parmenidean thesis is true. If, on the other hand, we prove, against that Parmenidean thesis, that ‘what is not’ *is* (or that ‘what is not’ can be combined with ‘what is’), the difficulty concerning what is not will disappear.” Notomi, *The Unity of Plato’s Sophist*, 174–75.
30. Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 209. Bluck suggests a similar view *in passim*. Bluck, *Plato’s Sophist*, 68.
 31. Palmer thinks otherwise and claims that the reduction here is not something “Plato would want to attribute to Parmenides himself.” John Palmer, *Plato’s Reception of Parmenides* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 164. Palmer generally refuses to admit that Plato had very serious qualms about Parmenides’s doctrine. For this reason, he claims that the Stranger is sometimes representing the sophistical appropriation of Parmenides’s doctrine and not that of Plato. *Ibid.*, 134ff.
 32. This fact is rarely acknowledged. A brief but forceful exception is Harold F. Cherniss, “Parmenides and the ‘Parmenides’ of Plato,” *American Journal of Philology* 53 (1932): 122–38. Shorey makes a similar claim *in passim*. Shorey, *What Plato Said*, 253. Malcolm Schofield concludes that in argument 2, Plato is exercising a version of the historical Parmenides’s principle in a manner that is “embarrassing to an Eleatic.” According to Schofield, Plato does this for “*ad hominem*” purposes, which he describes as Plato “simply developing lines of argument.” Malcolm Schofield, “A Neglected Regress Argument in the *Parmenides*,” *The Classical Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1973): 29–44, 33. Turnbull also acknowledges the connection between argument 2 and Plato’s criticism of Parmenides in *Sophist*. He says correctly that, in *Sophist*, Plato shows how Parmenides “engages in self-refutation.” However, Turnbull somehow assumes that Parmenides’s self-refuting argument becomes Plato’s own new mantra. Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato’s Late Philosophy*, 164. Palmer gives more elaborate attention to the connection between the present refutation and argument 2. However, he oddly divides the refutation into “two phases (244b 6–d 13 and 244d 14–245d 11)” and concludes that the first phase is “a sophistic” critique of Parmenides, who is misappropriated as a “predicational monist,” and “the second critique indicates how one might counter the [wrong] understanding of Parmenides as a predicational monist.” Whereas the first phase relates to argument 4, the second phase relates to argument 2. In short, Palmer thinks Stanger somehow shifts from a sophistical critique to a proper understanding of Parmenides in the middle of the same brief refutation. Palmer, *Plato’s Reception of Parmenides*, 166–81, 221.
 33. For a discussion of different views, see Bluck, *Plato’s Sophist*, 72–88. Also see Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 220ff.
 34. Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 229.

35. Sayre thinks the theory of power is very significant, and Plato is here offering his own theory. Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, 226–27. For an opposing view, see Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 234–38.
36. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 243–44; Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, 224–25; and Notomi, *The Unity of Plato's Sophist*, 219–20.
37. It is true that in *Phaedo*, Plato makes Socrates say that Forms are “invariable” and “independent” entities, whereas the sensible instances of these absolute entities are never free from variation (78d–79a); however, the same dialogue goes on to criticize those who believe that there is nothing abiding in either facts or notions and that everything merely fluctuates (90b). Besides, the theory of pure flux is utterly incompatible with the recollection and causation theories of *Phaedo*. As we have seen, *Cratylus*, *Republic*, and *Theaetetus* all make it abundantly clear that Plato does not accept the pure-flux theory of becoming. Yet scholars argue otherwise on account of the isolated passages they cherry-pick from *Phaedo*. For examples of this cherry-picking, see Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 245 and Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, 228.
38. For instance, according to Sayre, the mature Plato became dissatisfied with both his “notion of participation,” and his “doctrine of radical distinction between forms and sensible things.” How could Plato have a “notion of participation,” albeit an unsatisfactory one, and a “radical distinction,” or complete separation, theory at the same time? Without considering this contradictory proposal, Sayre says Plato, in *Sophist*, criticizes his earlier theory for separating “being and becoming.” Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, 19, 224. Likewise, Notomi thinks Plato is using the Stranger to give “an interesting self-critical view” of his own theory of Forms. Presumably, Plato is calling to task his earlier view, which denies “any ‘being’ (*ousia*) in bodily things.” Notomi, *The Unity of Plato's Sophist*, 220. Again, I am not aware of Plato ever doing this in any of his dialogues.
39. Cornford rightly thinks that this only appears to be the case, but it really is not. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 245. Bluck generally agrees with Cornford, though he adds that the Stranger may mean, by being known, that the “inessential attributes” of Forms change but not their “natures.” Ultimately, Bluck settles on the conclusion that the Stranger thinks Forms themselves do not change. Bluck, *Plato's Sophist*, 99–100. Sayre disagrees. He thinks the Stranger is arguing that Forms change by being known, and this rightly exposes a “contradiction” found in the theory of Friends. The presumed contradiction is this: “While insisting that being is constant and immovable, the ‘friends of the Forms’ maintain at the same time that mind and Forms ‘have commerce through reflection.’” Thus “‘knowing is acting upon something,’ with the necessary consequence that being known is ‘being acted upon.’ By this reasoning:

- 'being, in being known by an act of knowledge, to the extent that it is known, to that extent alters in being acted upon.'" This, claims Sayre, represents another "respect in which the conception of Forms in *Sophist* differs markedly from that in the middle dialogues." Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, 225.
40. However, Cornford says the Stranger's arguments "may be understood as showing that Plato . . . has become aware that he ought not any longer to speak as if the Forms were the whole of reality. Life, soul, and intelligence . . . must be real." Thus "the reformed idealist must surrender the mark of changelessness and allow that the real includes spiritual motion, as well as unchanging Forms." Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 246–47. Where does Plato say that "life, soul, and intelligence" are not real? To the contrary, in *Phaedo*, he calls the soul "the form of life," and "immortal," and says that "what is immortal is also indestructible" (107a).
 41. I omit here the Stranger's first attempt at the combination theory (249e–250e), which he concludes by saying, whereas earlier they were unsure of "to what the name 'unreal' should be applied," now they are "in no less perplexity about reality." This initial attempt, so it seems, has failed. The failure indicates that the perplexities surrounding the meaning of "unreal" (*is not* or *not-being*) and "reality" (*being*) still need to be resolved (250d–e).
 42. Some refer to this position as "semantic atomism" and suggest that it may even deny the possibility of self-identity statements. See Julius M. Moravcsik, "Being and Meaning in the *Sophist*," *Acta Philosophica Fennica* 14 (1962): 59.
 43. For instance, as quoted by Plutarch, Colotes criticizes the Megaric Stilpo for arguing that we "must separately name a man a man, good [as] good, and a captain [as] a captain." Plutarch, *Plutarch's Morals*, Vol. 5, trans. William W. Goodwin (Boston: Little, Brown, 1878), 365. Of course, Plato could not have been referring to Stilpo, who came of age shortly after Plato's death. Still, the Stranger's comment suggests that Stilpo's argument was made by earlier Megarics.
 44. Sayre thinks Plato is here offering a "complete repudiation" of his own earlier views. Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, 223–24.
 45. For instance, Aristotle describes a theory of "Ideas," as it was "originally understood by those who . . . were persuaded of the truth of the Heraclitean doctrine that all sensible things are ever passing away, so that if knowledge or thought is to have an object, there must be some other and permanent entities, apart from those which are sensible." Aristotle mentions here that the historical Socrates tried to define the "universal" essence of the sensible things, but he did not "make the universals . . . exist apart." His "successors" (many of them) gave these universals "separate existence" and called them "Ideas." Apparently, some held the view that Forms have nothing to do with the "substance" or

- “being” of things; otherwise, they reasoned, Forms “would have been in them.” This description of the view of some of Socrates’s followers matches the theory of Friends. Aristotle does not attribute this theory of radical separation to Plato, as it is commonly supposed. Instead, he goes on to say that Plato’s *Phaedo* treats Forms as the “causes of both being and of becoming.” Even though Plato held “Ideas . . . apart from” the “sensible things,” he nevertheless argued that “the multitude of things which have the same name as the Form exist by participating in it.” Repeating Socrates’s admission in *Phaedo*, at 100a–101b, Aristotle adds that Plato “left” the precise nature of “participation . . . an open question.” Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 1552–1728 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1078b–1080a, 1561 (987b). As Gail Fine rightly concludes, Aristotle is “right to say [Plato] does not” imply the radical separation of Forms. Gail Fine, *On Ideas: Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato’s Theory of Forms* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 116–19. On similar grounds, Taylor speculates that the theory the Stranger criticizes here belongs to some later Eleatics with whom the Stranger, as he tells us, is clearly familiar. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work*, 385. This is a more plausible speculation than the self-criticism speculation of Cornford and others.
46. For this reason, as he himself recognizes, Ryle’s following analogy attributes to the Stranger more than he is bargaining for. Ryle suggests that the special Forms, or “concepts,” like “existence [*Being*] and non-existence [non-*Being*] . . . perform . . . a logical role which is analogous to the role of vowels in syllables or that of syntax-rules in sentences. They function not like the bricks but like the arrangement of the bricks in a building.” Ryle, “Plato’s *Parmenides*,” 143–44.
 47. Cornford defends the view that the Stranger has Forms in mind. Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 250. Many other scholars concur with Cornford on this issue.
 48. Martin Heidegger writes, “I confess that I do not genuinely understand anything of this passage and that the individual propositions have in no way become clear to me, even after long study.” Martin Heidegger, *Plato’s Sophist*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 365.
 49. For a defense of this view, see Alfonso Gomez-Lobo, “Plato’s Description of Dialectic in the *Sophist* 253d 1–e 2,” *Phronesis* 22 (1977): 29–47. Notomi agrees with Gomez-Lobo. Notomi, *The Unity of Plato’s Sophist*, 235–37.
 50. Here, I avoid discussing the possibility of combining Motion and Rest. In a sense, the Stranger will later on combine them negatively by indicating that Motion *is not* Rest. For an interesting and controversial argument on how they could be combined, see Julius Stenzel, *Plato’s Method of Dialectic* (New York: Arno, 1973), 97–98.

51. See Notomi, *The Unity of Plato's Sophist*, 242, n. 70.
52. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 284–85.
53. Cornford claims that the five Forms are meant to be in a symmetrical relationship. Without going into the technical aspects of it, I agree with Cornford when he says, "It must not be assumed that" the relation between Forms "is the same that subsists between an individual thing (e.g., a man) and the Form (Man) that he 'partakes of.'" Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 256. For the asymmetrical-relation view, see John L. Ackrill, "Plato and the Copula: *Sophist* 251–259," in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, ed. Reginald E. Allen, 207–18 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 216–18.
54. For a very interesting treatment, and an account of various interpretations, see Paolo Crivelli, *Plato's Account of Falsehood: A Study of the Sophist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 177–220. Also see Lesley Brown, "Negation and Not-Being: Dark Matter in the *Sophist*," in *Presocratics and Plato: Festschrift at Delphi in Honor of Charles Kahn*, eds. Richard Patterson, Vassilis Karasmanis and Arnold Hermann, 233–54 (Las Vegas: Parmenides, 2012).
55. Edward N. Lee, "Plato on Negation and Not-Being in the *Sophist*," *The Philosophical Review* 81, no. 3 (July, 1972): 283–85.
56. Bluck. *Plato's Sophist*, 102ff.
57. Pace Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, 183–84.
58. Cornford makes confusing statements in this regard, saying, on the one hand, that the "weaving together of Forms" is required for all discourse and, on the other hand, that "at least one" Form is needed for a proper statement. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 300, 314. Ackrill criticizes Cornford of inconsistency and attempts to rescue Plato from himself. John L. Ackrill, "Symplekē Eidos," in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, ed. Reginald E. Allen, 199–206 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965).
59. Lee innovatively argues against the view that the Stranger conflates *not-being* with difference. Lee, "Plato on Negation and Not-Being in the *Sophist*," 288–304.
60. Against Apelt, Cornford gives an elaborate, and in my view contrived, explanation as to why the transition is justified. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 298–99, 298 n. 2.
61. See Richard S. Bluck, "False Statement in the *Sophist*," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77, no. 2 (1957): 181–86; David Keyt, "Plato on Falsity: *Sophist* 263B," in *Exegesis and Argument*, eds. Edward N. Lee, A. P. D. Mourelatos, R. M. Rorty, 285–305 (New York: Humanities, 1973); Kenneth M. Sayre, "Sophist 263B Revisited," *Mind* 85, no. 340 (1976): 581–86; John McDowell, "Falsehood and Not-Being in Plato's *Sophist*," in *Language and Logos*, eds. Malcolm Schofield and Martha C. Nussbaum, 115–34 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); David Bostock, "Plato on 'Is Not,'" *Oxford Studies in Ancient*

Philosophy 2 (1984): 89–119; Benardete, *The Being of the Beautiful*; Michael Frede, “Plato’s *Sophist* on False Statements,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. Richard Kraut, 397–424 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Lesley Brown, “The *Sophist* on Statements, Predication, and Falsehood,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*, ed. Gail Fine, 437–62 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2008); and Crivelli, *Plato’s Account of Falsehood*.

62. Palmer defends this view. Palmer, *Plato’s Reception of Parmenides*, 162.

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